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A
FATHER AS HE SHOULD BE.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

A

Father as he should be.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. HOFLAND,

AUTHOR OF

SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, CLERGYMAN'S WIDOW, VISIT TO LONDON, PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE, &c. &c.

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must be not only equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind: not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both. Friendship composed of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other. Marriage is the most perfect union of friendship. *Rambler.*

VOL. I.

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1815.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH,

This Work

IS

(BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S PERMISSION)

MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY HER

MOST DUTIFUL,

MOST DEVOTED,

VERY GRATEFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

B. HOFLAND.

A FATHER AS HE SHOULD BE.



CHAP. I.

"WHAT can I do?"

These words, spoken in a low tone, and followed by a heart-rending sigh, broke on the ear of sir Francis Mowbray, as he was passing the fishmonger's shop at the upper end of the Haymarket. His steps were arrested, his bosom penetrated by the deep despondency with which they were uttered; the speaker was a tall, slender, and not inelegant-looking woman; her back was towards sir Francis, and she was opening a little purse, as if to pay for a lobster that lay before her.

The baronet turned his head the second

time to look at this person, just at the moment when she, turning from the shopman, revealed to him a countenance that bore in every lineament traces of that severe suffering which had already, in her simple and unconscious exclamation, met his ear. She was young, and would perhaps have been beautiful, if sorrow had not shed its chilling influence on her withering bloom. Her face was pale and shrunk; and her full hazel eye, cast downward, appeared to dart its only ray through the long silken lashes that shaded her pallid cheek. Her dress was that of a widow, but evidently a distressed one; yet both in that, and her carriage, was evinced that latent dignity and unsubdued elegance which designate the gentlewoman.

Sir Francis was a compassionate, humane, and charitable man; he was accustomed to attend to the wants of his fellow-creatures, and to find much of his own happiness arise from relieving the sorrows, and contributing to the comfort of the afflicted, and for a moment he stopped, and looked

with benevolent anxiety, not unmixt with curiosity, towards the person who had so powerfully attracted him, and who was taking the same road with himself; his earnest, though not impertinent looks, evidently disconcerted her—a blush overspread her pale features, and her feeble steps became hurried. In a few moments she turned down a narrow street, and entering a court, disappeared.

Sir Francis pursued his way mechanically, for the more he ruminated on the appearance of this apparently forlorn being, the more he found himself interested for her. He could not doubt her poverty—there was something in her haggard face which indicated literal starvation; and although reason seemed to forbid the conclusion, since it was by no means likely that a person so situated should be purchasing a luxury, yet he could not help believing it, and feeling that desire to relieve her wants, which is the first wish of humanity, in cases of positive necessity. The baronet's wishes, though not yet sub-

mitted to his own investigation, went far beyond this species of instinctive compassion—he would have poured balm into the heart of this daughter of sorrow—he would have illumined her lonely and bereaved dwelling with the day-star of hope.

Sir Francis was angry with himself for having lost sight of the person in question, and neglected to offer assistance whilst yet it was valuable. Again and again her fragile form met his view, and seemed to reproach him for suffering it to sink into an early grave; yet on a closer revisal of the affair, he could not perceive the moment when he had possessed a right to address her, much less to tender her assistance. It was evident, that, " wounded by the deep regards she drew," she had taxed her weakened frame almost beyond its powers, to escape his observation; and, it was probable, would have resisted any offers he could have made her, from a sense of impropriety in conceding to them.

The baronet was at this time a handsome bachelor of thirty-five, and was newly ar-

rived in London, in consequence of his parliamentary engagements. He was a man of excellent moral character, ancient family, highly-respectable connexions, and large unincumbered estate. A person of this description is generally welcome wherever he goes; and the gentleman in question called on many old friends in the course of the morning, who welcomed him with the warmest professions of pleasure and regard; the cordial greetings of parents and brothers were seconded by the equally cordial glances shot from the bright eyes of daughters and sisters; and in one house, an affectionate family claimed the privilege of long acquaintance to enforce his dining with them. The evening was spent in cheerful and rational conversation, which was known to be the dearest amusement to their guest; past occurrences, present politics, country amusements, and the *belles lettres*, were each canvassed, and the mind of the baronet was drawn out in each; but a certain pensive cast still pervaded his feelings; and at every pause the whis-

per of "What can I do?" crossed his memory, and checked the sallies of his imagination, and the flow of his eloquence; it was neither in the power of good wine nor good company to erase the impression.

"I shall get the better to-morrow," said sir Francis, "of this weakness."

But a weakness so blended with all the better part of his nature, did not remove on the morrow; and finding that the form of the distressed widow still haunted his mind, and petitioned his aid, the benevolent baronet wisely determined that *he* would haunt the place where he had seen her, until he was enabled to offer that aid, or convince himself that it was unnecessary.

For several days his search was entirely fruitless; all the knowledge he could obtain was from the fishmonger, whom even the number and variety of his customers did not prevent from recollecting the person in question; he said "she lodged not far off, he was certain, as she had frequently bought shell-fish of him the winter before, which he had then under-

stood was for the captain her husband, who had died soon after Christmas, he apprehended."

This account only served to quicken the solicitude of compassion, which, after many fruitless efforts, was at length in some measure rewarded, by the same person, with a still feebler step, and more languid appearance, one day emerging from a chandler's shop in the neighbourhood of St. Alban's-street, at the moment the baronet entered on his accustomed watch. He felt himself still unable to speak to her; but he would not lose sight of a prize which had cost him so much trouble, especially at a time when it was evident his charity had a still stronger motive for exertion. He followed at a distance; and on her entering a house, and ascending two pair of stairs, he too entered, and turning into the first open door, inquired of a person, whom he apprehended to be the mistress of the house, "what was the name of the lady who lodged on her second floor?"

"Lady, indeed! she be not much more of a lady than myself," began a vulgar-looking woman, who was looking over a large lot of old clothes, and did not immediately perceive whom she addressed; but on turning round, she was struck with the person of sir Francis, whose appearance and dress were those of a gentleman, as gentlemen *were;* she instantly changed her tone, and advancing, began to satisfy the curiosity of her hearer beyond his simple question.

"Why, sir, Mrs. Mackenzie; all I know of Mrs. Mackenzie be this—she com'd here about a year back, or so, to lodge wi' the captain her husben; not as he was a captain nether, but only a liftenant, as I finds out aterwards; and to be sure, poor creeter, a sad time she's a had of it, ever sins she com'd under my roof, that's for certain; not but for that matter the captain (as we called him) was as good as gone then; I sed to my spouse, says I, the very first time as I see him, 'that gemman's no better than a dead man; and when he's gone,

who's to pay for the lodgins, I wonders?' those were the very words as I said."

"A very hopeful entrance," thought the baronet, "for a wife already trembling for the future."

She proceeded. "Well, sir, all turned out as I sed; there was he sinking, sinking, day by day, as it were, being he had bled so much with some wounds he had got over seas, that it had quite flung him into a decline; and there was she, poor creeter, with him and two little childer, fast enuff, I warrant, for I soon found out they had very little money, and all they had went for doctor's stuff, or to get some little matter as he could fancy. Many's the time she ha' made a dish a wish-washy tea, and a dry crust, last her the twenty-four hours, I knows; though she kept up, and made b'lieve as if she wanted nothing, just to set the captain's heart at ease."

"Good God, what wretchedness!" exclaimed the baronet.

"Why, yes, for certain, sir, it was bad enough; but still, somehow, she managed

better whilst he lived, for when he died, down dropt her heart, as it were, and she be now going ater him, to my mind, very fast."

"Two children! did you say TWO children?"

"There be only *one* now, sir, for the first died just ater the father; and this as be left is very sickly, and she be parfitly killing of herself to keep he alive, that be all I go to blame her for. When people be so poor, what's the use of childer, I wonders, but just to make them poorer? and, as I says, if it please God to take the boy, why so much the better; for then, as I says, says I, such a likely young woman as she be might get out into some kind of service, or might pick up another husband, or fifty things."

"Never, never, never!" cried sir Francis, flinging away, and hastening up stairs, with all the trepidation of feelings violently awakened, and which induced him to rush somewhat prematurely into the room where he had seen the widow enter.

Mrs. Mackenzie was kneeling by the side of a shabby little couch, feeding her sick child. She started on perceiving the stranger enter, and subdued as she was by long suffering, yet assumed an air of self-respect, which for a moment checked the approach of sir Francis, who, overwhelmed by all he beheld, as well as all he had heard, was unable to speak.

The emotion under which the sympathetic intruder evidently suffered, awoke anew the sorrows of the widow, while it gave a softer tone to their expression; it was long since the voice of comfort had been heard in her desolate dwelling, and she prepared to listen to its accents with gratitude, though aware that it came in a " questionable shape."

Her tears flowed freely; and her little boy perceiving them, stretched out his arms to come to her, as if to ask protection, and communicate support by his caresses, while he fearfully asked—" Mamma, what does he want? he shan't hurt mamma, nor take Henry from her; no, he shan't!"

"My little fellow," said the baronet, "I would not take you from mamma, nor hurt either of you for the world; here, my pretty boy, take these pieces of paper; tell mamma to get you a country lodging, and a physician, and take this card, and tell her, when they are finished, to send for more."

The unconscious child eagerly grasped the "pretty papers;" whilst the mother, agitated almost to fainting, feebly and tremulously exclaiming—"No, no! no country lodgings!" sunk on the nearest chair.

Sir Francis was hurt—almost offended; but a moment's recollection told him that sorrow too often implants suspicion, even in the bosom of innocence; and the nearer view he now obtained of the fine, though faded person of the sufferer, told him it was but too likely that the offers of the unprincipled, or the snares of the insidious, had already added to her afflictions, and that he ought to honour the resistance he condemned; stepping back, he said, in a tone where slight reproach mingled with

profound compassion—"Though I am a stranger to you, madam, and have obtruded somewhat abruptly on your privacy, yet as my manners have, I trust, been as inoffensive as my motives are pure, do not suffer an excess of delicacy to deprive your child of the assistance he evidently needs. I leave you, and do not expect to see you again, unless you desire it, in order to point out the way in which I can serve you."

The widow was now oppressed by overflowing gratitude. She rose, she would have flung herself at his feet; but unable to speak or act, she sunk again into her seat, uttering faint sounds of inarticulate thankfulness.

Sir Francis descended, paid the arrears due to her landlady, which had accumulated to a sum beyond her power to discharge, which was evidently the true cause of her continuance there, although by continued exertion with her needle she had endeavoured, during those hours when her son slept, to lessen the amount. He earnestly

recommended her to the humanity of this person, little as he was aware she possessed; yet he was willing to induce her, by any means, to assist her unhappy lodger; and he knew enough of human nature to be aware that it is seldom so degraded as not to be affected with the honour implied by confidence, and he saw the positive necessity of immediate care to the famishing widow, and her helpless little one.

The consciousness of having performed a good action, especially one which has compassion or restitution for its basis, seldom fails to spread a delightful calm over the heart, and awaken the mind to finer perceptions of excellence and pleasure in all around us. The baronet felt this undoubtedly to a considerable degree, as he retraced his steps homeward; but yet a pensive character of thought suffused his features, and he went slowly and heavily, as if borne by necessity from the place he had promised to visit no more. His feelings and his curiosity were yet unsatisfied; the former wished to pour abundance ra-

ther than the boon of beneficence into the lap of the wretched one, and the latter wished to know every circumstance, and almost every thought, of one in whom he was become so deeply interested.

It will be readily supposed that a being so helpless and forlorn, so long bereaved, and so acutely suffering, could not experience the sudden relief thus unexpectedly bestowed—relief which promised the preservation of that only relic of happiness, that single being who remained to render life endurable,without experiencing the most lively gratitude of which a tender and virtuous heart is capable, and that, of course, it was not long before sir Francis received a letter, in which these feelings were forcibly though inadequately depicted. With pleasure, rather than surprise, sir Francis perceived in this epistle every mark of superior education, cultivated mind, and simple elegance, for which he had, on apparently very slight grounds, given the writer credit. It did not, however, invite him to

visit the retreat his bounty had provided, and his word was sacred.

Through the medium of a correspondence which sought the permanent benefit of his *protegée*, sir Francis became acquainted with those further particulars in her life which were necessary to be known to him, in order that he might essentially serve her, and visit her not only with probity, but propriety. These particulars, together with others not so much her province to relate, shall be thrown together in the following chapters.

CHAP. II.

LOUISA Deverell was the only child of a gentleman, who had the misfortune or folly to offend his father by a matrimonial alliance with a young woman devoid of

fortune and connections, though of very respectable birth. He was the eldest of three brothers; but from the time of his marriage was declared disinherited, in right of the second.

The youngest son was at this time serving in the army, and notwithstanding his youth, enjoyed a high reputation, not more for the valour he had successfully displayed, but the noble generosity of his disposition, and the steady propriety of his conduct. He was particularly attached to his eldest brother, who had ever been his warm friend, and frequently his successful advocate with a penurious father, who had grudged to his opening career those indulgences befitting his situation. These acts of kindness were now cordially returned. Charles interceded strongly for the restoration of a son to the paternal bosom, who had till now been worthy of its tenderest welcome—but he interceded in vain; and finding all remonstrances ineffectual, and being aware that his brother, being educated to no profession, was incap-

able of any other mode of subsistence, he next endeavoured to procure him a commission, and at length succeeded.

In proportion as Mr. Deverell the elder hardened his heart against his eldest son, so that of his younger appeared to expand with more tenderness. On his return to England he found that brother, to whom from infancy he had been taught to look up as *his* future protector, subsisting, with his wife and infant daughter, on the wretched pay of an ensign, yet bearing their sufferings with fortitude, under the idea that even this was better than being torn from each other, which would inevitably be the case whenever Mr. Deverell was promoted. He was deeply affected with their situation; and he devoted himself to their service, by curtailing every expenditure of his own, as far as possible, and at length succeeded in obtaining promotion for his brother, without the terrible penalty that appeared to be annexed to it; at the same time he made a resolution, that so long as *he* remained in the army, no circumstance should

induce him to form a matrimonial engagement, wisely concluding, that the wife of a soldier is unavoidably exposed to sufferings inconsistent with the powers of any female whose education has subjected her to the evils inseparable from refinement.

Mr. Edward Deverell, the father of Louisa, was a man of mild manners, retired disposition, and formed rather for literary pursuits, than to blend in the gay throng that attend " the pomp and circumstance of war ;" he was, however, by no means deficient either in personal courage or any other manly virtue, and as his family increased, he could not bear either to press on the generosity of his brother, or suffer any means of improving his situation to escape ; he therefore used his endeavours get an appointment which might facilitate his promotion; and as this was the period of our contest with the American colonies, he soon after gained an appointment, in which he was accompanied by his faithful partner, who preferred every risk of suffering with him, to being left in a

country which to her would be friendless and desolate without him.

During a long state of harrassing warfare, sometimes together, sometimes separated—now pillowing her aching head on the more aching bosom of her beloved spouse, and now craving help from the proud American, or the suffering child of Africa, Mrs. Deverell became the mother of five children, of which two were victims of the small-pox in one fatal day; and two others, fine promising boys, who might have lived beneath a grandsire's fostering care, here drooped and died, from disorders incident to the harrassing life and frequent privations ever attendant on scenes like these. Louisa alone, though a delicate blossom, possessed sufficient strength of constitution to withstand the complicated hardships of her situation; she returned with her parents in her eleventh year, a flower of no common promise, the delight and the charm of their existence.

Captain Deverell's regiment was broke soon after their return to England; and

he retired on half-pay to a cheap village in the North of England, after making once more an ineffectual overture to his father, who was now advanced in life, and thought to be in a declining way. Mrs. Deverell was again pregnant, and her health so extremely delicate, as to be very alarming to her affectionate husband; but his cares were called, in a great measure, even from her, by the arrival of his brother, now colonel Deverell, who returned from the same unhappy contest, so reduced in consequence of his wounds, as to render him the first object of attention to this affectionate little family, which he greatly preferred to that which now occupied principally the mansion of his ancestors.

Mrs. Deverell had now but too good an opportunity of proving her gratitude and esteem for this incomparable brother. Alas! her warm and gentle heart felt his claims but too fully! suppressing every complaint of her own, she acted so truly the part of a skilful and indefatigable nurse towards him, that her own ailments were

confirmed, and her constitution too much reduced to sustain the approaching trial. Louisa, kind and considerate beyond her years, for sorrow and affection give a melancholy maturity to the heart, endeavoured to save her mother from fatigue, and no less did the unvarying tenderness of her father assist her efforts; but all assistance was in vain; in giving birth to another son the long-loved wife expired, and was soon followed to the grave by her helpless little one.

Colonel Deverell had shared the fortune, and he now shared the sorrows of his brother. Louisa was the care, the hope, the comfort of both; for her sake they suppressed the grief in which she took an ample part—for her the father resolved to endure life—for her the uncle wished to attain prosperity.

Recovered from the effects of his late sufferings, still in the very prime of life, and calculated equally by nature and habit for a life of enterprize, it was no wonder that when the first effusions of grief

and sympathy had subsided, colonel Deverell again entered on the duties of his profession, in the service of the East India Company. After his departure, the father of Louisa applied himself with diligence to her education; and all the long-suspended accomplishments he possessed were called into action for her sake. Wounded and repulsed as he had been by his father, he could not bring himself to make any farther concessions, especially at a time when his heart was bleeding for the loss of that very wife who had innocently been the cause of dividing them. But yet he secretly nourished that hope for his child, which he could not indulge for himself; and believed, that although his paternal rights might be denied to *him*, they would eventually be restored to his child; and in this dream of affection his brother the colonel so entirely concurred, that he was equally desirous with himself that Louisa should enjoy every possible advantage of education, and be fitted for a situation she

was by nature calculated to adorn and enjoy.

But, alas! while the fond father thus lavished all his tenderness, and spent his scanty stores to form his daughter for a woman of fortune, these fond hopes were for ever blasted. His father died, bequeathing not only his estates, but their large accumulations during a life of devotion to this end, entirely to his second son, to whom he had ever been partial, on account of his avaricious disposition, cruelly involving the youngest in the guilt ascribed to the eldest, because, as it was expressed in his vindictive and unjustifiable will, " he had manifestly encouraged and supported him in his disobedience."

From this concluding stroke of parental vengeance captain Deverell never recovered. His constitution had been deeply, though unobtrusively injured in America, and the death of his wife and infant son had added to the latent wound. From this time he sunk slowly, but certainly, into that tomb, towards which he looked as the

haven of his wanderings—the veil of his afflictions. For Louisa alone he feared and wept; but from her he anxiously concealed the fate he felt to be inevitable, until it became impossible to hide it longer, when he omitted no means in his power to comfort her heart, and invigorate her understanding: for her sake too he made some advances towards that brother who had so long forsaken him, under plea of their father's commands. He was not encouraged to hope for much kindness from this relative; but he was, during the absence of the colonel, constrained to accept that little, as he had no possibility of providing any other eligible home for his child than the house of this uncle, until the far-distant return of Charles, who, he was well aware, would be to her another father—a circumstance his brother was likewise aware of, ere he promised even a reluctant protection to the unhappy girl.

Mr. James Deverell had been designed by his father for the practice of the law;

and agreeable to this designation, had been placed, in his sixteenth year, with an eminent solicitor. He was remarkable, even at this period, for his strict attention to his own interest, and became the favourite of his father, from shewing a disposition to that care which was his own characteristic, and which his visits, from time to time, at his father's seat, enabled him to exemplify. At one of these visits he perceived that the long-declining health of his mother had now placed her beyond the reach of earthly help, and calculating on the probable length of her life, he began to consider it but too possible that his father might chuse another helpmate, seeing his sons were all parted from him, unless he, in the provident care of his love, supplied the cares and comforts her unwearied, but ill-rewarded attentions had hitherto bestowed on his father.

Anxious at once to prevent a circumstance inimical to the future welfare of his family, and also to secure himself in the possession of affluence, on his return to

town, he made hasty addresses to the widow of a wealthy cheesefactor, to whom his profession had introduced him, and who, considering him a handsome young man, and a man of family, was not slow in accepting his offer; and they were united a few weeks previous to the dissolution of Mrs. Deverell.

Mrs. James Deverell had a son and daughter by her former husband; but as they were amply provided for, so far from being deemed incumbrances, the management of their fortunes during a long minority had been reckoned among the douceurs of this singular union; and immediately on the death of Mrs. Deverell, her son James determined on removing into the country with his whole family, for the *ostensible* purpose of soothing his father, the *actual* purpose of securing that father's property, which was finally fulfilled.

But during the lapse of years which succeeded, the careful, wheedling, plotting, and successful brother, did not "sleep on roses;" his pangs and fears were indeed

more " than war, or women know," for from time to time the voice of nature would speak in the father's heart, in behalf of his absent sons; and when that was silenced, many disgusts incident to querulous old age, and daily increasing avarice, was subject to arise towards his son, that son's wife, or her ill-bred, wayward brats. Hence James had many wounds to heal, many concessions to make, many vexations to appease, on the side of his father; while his domestic pillow was thickly strewn with thorns by the other party, even when most he endeavoured to conciliate both; and his personal pride found as much to encounter on one hand, as his prudential fears and meanness on the other.

Mrs. James Deverell was coarse in her person, contracted in her ideas, illiterate, and ill-bred, boisterous, self-willed, and ill-mannered; she loved money rather for purposes of expence than avarice, being purse-proud and showy, so that James, in a great measure, found his purpose and anxious desire of accumulation perpetu-

ally thwarted, by the very person whom he had married for the express purpose of attaining this single object. By the same rule, his designs on his father were injured also, since every act of what was deemed his wife's extravagance, was sure to be avenged on *his* head, although it was well understood that her own jointure supplied it. When this was submissively urged by the son to the father, he was generally answered with—"When a gentleman like you, James, a man of family, education, and person, marries a low-born, vulgar, plain woman, much older than himself, he certainly ought to be paid for his degradation; if your wife spends the money she brought, how can this be done?"

A life of such perpetual vexation, such wearisome solicitude, such extreme anxiety, as a person so situated endures, cannot be repaid by any eventual success, even if the attainment of riches were accompanied by the honours of rank, and the better consciousness of popularity; but Mr. James Deverell had no hopes of either of

the latter, though he was well aware they give to wealth that splendor and power which alone render it desirable to any creature that rises above the mere sensualist. On the contrary, the vulgarity of his wife disgusted the more respectable part of his neighbours, and the remembrance of the brother rendered him detestable in the eyes of the lower order, who considered him the unjust supplanter of that brother's rights; so that he found himself alienated from society on the one hand, and respect on the other; and though he continued to hug the vice which had led him into error, he had yet sensibility enough to feel the wounds it inflicted. He became melancholy, silent, abstracted; and although every expenditure of his wife might be said to wring his vitals, or alarm his fears, yet he seldom contended with her on points which experience told him he would not carry; but sinking into sullen petulance, he sighed over the misfortune, or endeavoured, by some new mode of saving or gaining in another quarter, to

obviate its effects; and when such mode did not present itself, and the wound was cutting, he had too frequently recourse to a private bottle.

Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that Louisa found her uncle James, although surrounded by all the comforts, and even splendor, his fortune warranted, (for such his lady insisted upon,) looking in her eyes a much older and more care-worn man than she had ever known her father, until his last illness. Over that illness, and all the agonizing sorrows it produced to this bereaved and desolate girl, we pass, simply observing, that they were borne as such must ever be, by a heart of extreme sensibility, which yet received the stroke as from that unerring hand she had ever been taught not only to reverence, but adore and love.

When Louisa approached that mansion whose inhospitable gates had been so long closed to her beloved father, a sense of indignation mingled with the sorrow under

which she laboured; and she felt as if in condescending to accept such an asylum, she derogated from the idolizing respect due to his memory; but remembering that she complied with *his* will, in doing it, and believing that he would approve of the conduct she should pursue in a situation he had frequently adverted to as arduous, though without specifying its difficulties, she regained the general tone of her feelings, and entered the abode of her ancestors with no other traces on her countenance than those incident to her situation as a bereaved orphan. But when her uncle met her in the hall, when she beheld the pale face and withered features, whose form at least strongly reminded her of those over which she had lately hung in sorrowing fondness, they forcibly struck her, and appeared at once to obliterate every painful impression received towards him, and awaken only sentiments of tenderness and confidence; for a moment she gazed on him, then rushing forward, flung herself upon his neck, burst into a flood

of tears, faintly murmuring—" My father! my poor father!"

Though cold by nature, and steeled by habit, yet the heart of James Deverell was penetrated and warmed by the bitter grief and simple reliance evinced by this artless and lovely relative thus thrown on his protection. He inwardly congratulated himself on the consummate skill he had displayed during many past years towards his brother, whom he imagined he had successfully cajoled into the belief of his entire innocence respecting their father's testament in his own favour; and he therefore concluded, that instead of receiving an injured but dependant being, who at once hated and crouched to him, he embraced an unsuspicious and generous girl, who would look to him as her natural protector, and repay even his limited services with that love to which he had been hitherto a stranger.

The most selfish, cold-hearted, and unfeeling of human beings, so long as he stops short of that active vice and hideous

barbarity ascribed to the fiercely wicked, will, at some period or other of his earthly pilgrimage, be sensible that whatever may be his own peculiar object of attraction and pursuit, the love of some kind heart, the reciprocal confidence of some affectionate being, on whose sincerity he can rely, is the sweetest drop in the cup of life; and is alike calculated to sooth its sharpest asperities, and give zest to its highest enjoyments. No wonder, therefore, that for a moment Mr. Deverell felt drawn to his niece by a tie as new to his feelings as it was strong in his expression; for since the time when his anxiety had ceased, and his wishes been fulfilled, he had more peculiarly felt the utter loneliness of his heart and his mind, neither of which held any communion with any thing around him, if we except one sickly infant, the only surviving child he possessed, and on which his hopes were fixed rather as his future heir than his future comfort; being well aware, from the experience of many a bitter hour, that so soon as it emerged from

the nursery, those habits would be formed, those tempers indulged, which would convert the innocent blossom into a noxious weed, or deleterious plant.

"You are welcome to Cleveland, my dear," said the softened uncle, as he warmly returned Louisa's embrace, adding, as he led her to the breakfast-parlour, "Mrs. Deverell and her daughter have taken a drive this fine morning; but they will return to dinner, and will be happy to find you are safely arrived."

Louisa was too much agitated for reply; she had entered the only room in the house which had not undergone the modernizing hand of Mrs. Deverell, and over the chimney-piece hung, as it were wont, a family picture, which had often been described to her, and where her eager eye sought for the infantine features ever so dear to her; they were easily traced, for even the corroding hand of care, and the anguish of connubial regret, had not effaced that expression of open frankness and mild magnanimity which had characterized the fine

face of captain Deverell. Louisa gazed with an emotion that blended delight with agony. She felt as if she read his virtues in his form, and exulted that a being so formed to be loved and reverenced had been her father. She remembered how faded had been that form ere it vanished from her sight—how blasted in its prospects—smitten by its domestic calamities! and a pang more deep than all the past succeeded the momentary triumph.

It is probable that the uncle likewise, at this time, read and compared—it is certain he likewise suffered, as, shrinking from even the timid though speaking eye of Louisa, as it glanced from the picture to his own countenance, he pleaded business, and retired.

Louisa was now emerging from that happy season of life, when " the tear forgot as soon as shed," leaves no traces of pain on the wounded bosom; yet she was blest with that elasticity of spirits, that lively curiosity, and that daily maturing mind, which enables youth to spring from

the grasp of sorrow, in search of more congenial intercourse; and recovering from the severe emotion she had experienced, she looked forward with no small interest to the hour which should introduce her to the female part of the family; and conscious that travelling all night had rendered her completely *en dishabille,* she prepared herself in the best manner her mourning admitted, for a suitable appearance at Mrs. Deverell's table.

In following the servant to the apartment allotted to her, the composure she had sought to attain again nearly forsook her, since every thing around marked the sad change which had taken place in her father's circumstances; and she could scarcely avoid believing, that had he been blessed with such a home as this, his shattered health might have been restored. This subject had been rarely mentioned by her father, who, foreseeing the necessity he should be under of claiming a temporary protection for her, had been peculiarly careful not to let any thing escape

him, which should tend to render Louisa's dependence on James more irksome than he was aware it must necessarily be; but the tender and alarmed child was rendered too penetrating not to trace how severely he suffered from disappointment, and therefore she had felt regret for the loss of what was never defined to her till now, since her modest wants had *ever* been supplied, and her early years and judicious education had prevented her from making any comparison on the gifts of fortune inimical to her happiness.

But the generous heart that feels least for itself, will yet entertain strong, and even ambitious desires, for those it loves; and though it never crossed Louisa's mind that she was herself the rightful heiress of this spacious house, fair spreading lawn, and fruitful fields, yet she could not help giving a heart-rending sigh to the thought, that they had been denied to her parents. She endeavoured to reason, as she had been taught to do, against repining at the dispensations of Providence—"Are they not,"

said she, " more happy than even this paradise could have made them? they have 'an inheritance in heaven, an abode that passeth not away;' besides, they are *together* —I only am alone."

Again she wiped her eyes, and endeavoured to ascend, by silent supplication, to that Fountain of good from whence comfort never fails to flow; and although the trepidation arising from native modesty, as well as conscious dependence, gave a deeper colour to her cheek, and shot a trembling lustre to her full black eye, as she obeyed the summons to dinner, yet she obtained such a portion of tranquillity and self-possession, as to evince not less the powers of a commanding mind, than manners of a gentlewoman; and on finding her uncle ready to conduct her to his lady, she whispered peace to her heart, as with a confiding smile she presented him her hand, naturally, though falsely concluding, that the society of her own sex could not fail to be as engaging to her, as it was, on some accounts, desirable.

CHAP. III.

Mrs. Deverell and her daughter, Miss Chester, rose as Louisa entered the room; but this motion appeared involuntary, as they both instantly sat down again. In paying her respects to the lady of the mansion, she was cruelly embarrassed by the broad, and by no means conciliating, stare of that lady's daughter; but she was at least equally confused, though not equally annoyed, when Mrs. Deverell, with a Stentorian voice, and in a dialect perfectly new to her, thus addressed her:—

"Sit down, Miss, sit down; you be tired enuff, I warrant; but you may think yourself werry vel off as you be comed safe and sound; for my part, I hates stage-coaches, and hackney-coaches, and all them there kind of wehicles, monstraciously; but that's nither here nor there; those as can't afford nothin no better, must be glad

to take up with they. Thank my stars! I an't a sin the inside of none this many a year."

Mr. Deverell observed, " Louisa must indeed experience great fatigue from travelling all night."

" Those things depend on habit," said Miss Chester, with a scornful toss of her head, which appeared subject to this species of oscillation. " I don't suppose fatigue is new to Miss Deverell; people in her station are forced to stir about in more unpleasant ways than riding even in a stage-coach, I take it."

" Why, aye, to be sure," observed the mother, " use is second nater; besides, comin to such a house as this is worth havin a bit o' rumblin and jumblin for. It's not what she's a bin much used to, I takes it; but howsomdever, she may a sin summut, in some place. Pray haven't you bin a great traveller, Miss?"

" I travelled with my parents, ma'am."

" I suppose so; I understands you are very learned in them there matters, though

you hopped off short in your eddication in other things, I take it for reasons good; but, however, talking of eddication, I don't suppose as there's another to be found like my daughter, Miss Charlotte Chester; and well she may, being as it's cost a mint o' money; but what I was going to say is this, did you ever eat any real frogs in France?"

"I never was in France, madam."

"Never in France! why, Mr. Deverell, didn't you tell me she went over seas with her father and mother?"

"Certainly—so she did."

"Well, and pray, didn't you tell me that France was over seas? and didn't my son, and Charlotte too, make quite a game of me, because I said I wouldn't go to France on no consideration on shipboard? what contradictious nonsense! if a person goes abroad, as they call it, why, they goes abroad, that is, over seas; and then if they doesn't see what is to be seen, more fools they, and eat what is to be eat too."

The conversation was broken up by the

servant announcing dinner; on which Mrs. Deverell said—"Oh! I forgot to tell you, parson Bailey is coming; I invited him as I came through the village, for any body's better than nobody; but I shure you I'd somethin to do to get him to come, more fool he—a good dinner's no bad thing, hey, Miss?"

This "any body parson" was a truly venerable clergyman, who had nearly reached his eightieth year, yet happy in an excellent constitution, found the winter of life "frosty but kindly;" and in the possession of all his faculties, a highly-cultivated mind, a soul rich in virtue and experience, offered a companion of no common excellence to those who knew how to estimate his worth. It may be readily supposed, that in his present circle he was lost; for even Mr. Deverell could not enjoy the society of a man whom he knew contemned him in his heart. Louisa was, however, an exception to the rest; great as was the disparity in their years and knowledge, she felt a kindred mind was near

her, and the many gracious smiles accorded by the good old man, soothed and reassured her; and however slightly the vulgar mistress of the house might look upon what she termed a poor parson, Louisa was sensible of receiving honour from his courtesy, and protection from his kindness.

Still more did this intuitive sympathy affect her, when, after dinner, Mr. Bailey presented his snuff-box to the ladies, saying, as he offered it to her—"Young lady, though you cannot take a pinch with me, you must admire my box; it has been a faithful servant almost thirty years, and many a time during the last twenty has it been moistened with a tear, due to the friendship of the excellent donor."

Louisa, as she took the box from the hand that shook as he presented it, perceived that even now his eyes glistened with the precious drops gathered by sympathy, as with parental tenderness they bent their enfeebled rays on her. There needed not a word to inform her, that *her* father had presented the precious relic; and

while her eyes spoke the same language, her heart throbbed with grateful affection towards the reverenced being who had thus remembered him. She felt as if she had gained a friend—another father; one who would guide her steps, and sooth her sorrows; and by her looks she entreated him to accept the guardianship of her heart—the compact was silent, but sacred—death alone could dissolve it.

In the evening arrived Mr. Chester, then about two-and-twenty—a bold, impertinent, forward coxcomb, who affected more vices than he possessed, under the idea that they gave him the air of a man of fashion, which was the only character he aspired to enjoy, although it was one of all others he was least calculated to attain. He might have made an active tradesman, for he was calculated for bustle and exertion, or a very proper fox-hunting 'squire, by the same rule; so that it would have been very possible for him to have attained notoriety in either line; but to affect *ennui*, intrigue, or taste, with any success, was

utterly impossible; and the attempt rendered that a disgusting eccentricity, which would otherways have been at worst ridiculous and harmless. Both himself and sister were indebted to the cares of their father-in-law for those advantages of education which would probably have been withheld by the total ignorance and vulgar cares of their purse-proud, expensive, and yet mean mother; but as early habits had been naturally formed by that mother, and increased by an intercourse with her—as neither of them had good understandings, or the smallest glimmering of taste or sensibility, their education had raised them little above their original level. It had taught them to despise their mother for her gross ignorance, at which they were shocked, because it betrayed the lowness of their origin; but it had not led them, in consequence, to feel grateful towards the father-in-law, whose rank in life had removed them to a higher sphere; on the contrary, they disliked *him* as much as they despised *her*, and they lost no opportunity

of making their sentiments manifest, even to their lowest menials.

"Dicky, my son, do you see parson Bailey is here? you looks at nobody but Miss."

"I see nobody else worth seeing," replied the youth, with a knowing shrug, and an impudent stare; when recollecting that *nonchalance* on every occasion was "the rage," he opened his mouth wide enough to shew a handsome set of teeth, and that he intended to gape, and added, stretching himself—"I see nobody, no, nobody at all, Mrs. Deverell—y-a-w."

At this moment the door opened, and a nurse-maid appeared, leading a pale but pretty child, about four years old, to Mrs. Deverell, for the purpose of bidding her a good-night. It appeared strange to Louisa that this should be the first appearance of the heir of the mansion, and that the sole survivor of a race all perished, whom, from circumstances, she should have expected to see indulged and idolized to

excess, should appear to excite so little attention in the family. Her own heart, accustomed to witness and partake the tenderest maternal cares, and remembering, with sincere regret, the little claimants on her affections, now for ever lost, expanded to this new-found relative, towards whom she intuitively held out her arms.

Children have been, with great propriety, deemed natural physiognomists, for when left to themselves, they generally select those as objects of their attention who are indeed most worthy of it. Little James stopped short ere he reached his mother, and rushed into the open arms of the stranger.

Naturally shy and timid, he was not easy in his situation, yet he forbore to quit it; and in a few moments began to play with the long ringlets that fell on her shoulders, and steal a look towards the swimming eyes that tenderly gazed upon him, as again they marked the family lineaments visible in his features. At length, moved by compassion, he conquered his fears so far as to

throw one arm round her neck, and drawing down her head, whispered—"Don't cry, and I will give you my new top."

Louisa, already affected, was overpowered either by the affection of the speech, or the tones of the voice which uttered it, and as the maid at the same moment required him to come to bed, she resigned her lovely and now-beloved burden, and hastily left the room.

Mr. Deverell, whose heart, "albeit unused to the melting mood," had this day been peculiarly softened and awakened, felt more than usually drawn towards his child, and requested that he might be left for a few minutes—a request instantly opposed by his lady, her son, and daughter, who on other occasions would not have been equally concordant. Unable to stem the torrent, yet not disposed to relinquish a pleasure seldom desired, and still seldomer indulged, he quitted the room with the boy in his arms; on which Mrs. Deverell exclaimed—"Bless my life! I wonder

what's come to him! I never seed him carry a child to bed in all my life before!"

"'Twould be easy for him to return the compliment; for who ever saw you do such a thing? tenderness is not your *forte*, I believe—y-a-w."

"I be sure, Dicky, you be the last person in the world as should say so, for manny's the hour I ha' sat by your bedside, becase for why? I had nobody to nurse you much, but my ownself; for when you was a little un, your grandfather, old Chester, was alive, and he kept a tight hand on us. But, howsomdever, I believe nobody feels the same naturalness, as it were, towards a second clitch of children, as they does towards the first; what say you, Mr. Bailey? I takes it you are learned in these matters."

"I have certainly the advantage of experience, having been twice married."

"Indeed! I be glad to hear it; there be my daughter here goes to say, people

never can love but once; whereas I'm sure I loved her father and his children very dearly; and when he were dead and gone, why, to be sure, then I loved Mr. Deverell; and wery natural too, for he was quite young, and as handsome a man as ever trod shoe leather, for all he looks so old and peaking, as it were, now-a-days."

"Like you, madam, I have twice been tenderly attached; but I will so far coincide with your daughter, as to own the attachment was very distinct in its nature, at the *commencement* of each engagement; although for her information I can assure her, that in time each species of my love mellowed into that tender friendship, which is the best bond, and the sweetest charm of existence. When young, I loved; and after long and anxiously debating on the points whether I should conquer my passion, or brave the ills of life with the object of it, I at length, like thousands in the same situation, chose what I concluded the lesser evil, and at four-and-twenty, with a curacy of fifty pounds a-

year, married a girl of eighteen without a shilling."

"Y-a-w—she was pretty, I take it, old gentleman, hey? pretty, I suppose?"

"Pretty, sir! she was an angel! her beauty was indeed exquisite (at least in my eyes), but her mind, her manners, the purity of her heart, the warmth of her affection—oh, she was a wonderful creature!"

Louisa had re-entered the room, as the old clergyman, with animated voice, and eyes that beamed with renovated life, was uttering this eulogium on his long-lost love. She fancied that he could be speaking only of her mother, and was again extremely agitated. But Louisa had been taught, not less by precept and example than by affection and inborn generosity, to control every feeling which could annoy those around her, and she sat down in silence, eagerly listening to a narrative of such supposed interest.

"Go on, sir," said Mrs. Deverell; "I likes to hear a love story now and then;

though, as I tells Miss Chester, my daughter, love and beauty buys no mutton, and I takes it that's what you are going to say next."

"I might undoubtedly say it, for many and severe were my sufferings, from poverty and repeated disappointment, during the ten following years; yet so precious is the memory of this season of life and love, that I will not sully its brightness by reflecting on its occasional sorrows. It closed too soon for my happiness—it left me forlorn and wretched!"

"So your wife died, I supposes?—aye, well! *we* shall die some time; but it's what I never likes to think of, though 'tis quite right as *parsons* and them there kind of folks should, in the way of trade, as one may say."

Mr. Bailey wiped his eyes, took a pinch of snuff, and proceeded.

"My Mary had brought me four lovely children; and in order to better my situation, I had lately taken a little farm, which wanted the cares of a prudent mistress;

after her death, all things went wrong; my cattle died, my children were sickly, my servants idle. The pale faces of my motherless babes drew the attention of a lady who had lately come to settle in the village, and her sympathetic inquiries concerning them first led me from the constant contemplation of the grief which, I blush to say, in despite of reason and religion, was then consuming me. I felt soothed by her attentions—grateful for her humanity. I visited her, and found myself drawn from that terrible apathy of grief which can alone be estimated by those who have felt it. I complained, I wept—and she wept with me."

"I durst lay twenty pounds to a brass farthin that you married her in the long run."

"You are right, madam; she condescended to love me, to raise me from my sorrows, to be a mother to my poor babes, and—"

"But had she got the needful, sir?"

"*Needful*, madam! she had all things needful—a generous heart, a gentle spirit,

a cultivated mind, a pious and enlightened—"

"But, Lord, sir, had she any cash?"

"She had two hundred pounds per annum for life, and a thousand pounds at her own disposal; she had just entered her thirtieth year, was handsome, well-bred, and highly connected."

"Well, begging your pardon, she was the biggest fool as ever I hard tell of; for though the money you speak of be nothin as times go, 'twas quite riches to you; and to go and fling herself away on a country parson, with four or five brats—my stars! she *did* bring her pigs to a fine market."

"Yet after the space of five-and-thirty years, when she fell asleep in these arms, she said, madam, that 'goodness and mercy had followed her all her days;' and thanking her heavenly Father for the past, joyfully trusted him for that which was to come."

"Well, there's no accounting for fancies. And what children did she bring?"

"Four, madam, who were as dear to me as their inestimable mother was valuable. Children are rendered dear indeed, by their own helplessness; if our duty did not demand care of them, we must bestow it for their own sakes."

"Yes, to be sure, if one hasn't servants and people to see a'ter them; but for that matter, I looks upon all them there things to be governed by how a man's property is."

"Madam!"

"Why, you see, sir, if Mr. Deverell's property was a-going, as most people's is, from father to son, why then, to be sure, one would be sadly afeard o' my little James dying; but being as how he may leave it as he likes, there's no use in going to be uneasy, becase he may as well leave it to Mr. Richard Chester as not."

Mr. Bailey rose to depart, contented with the explanation of maternal love which he had received, and fully conscious that the comments he might be inclined to make would be useless. In his pitying

look, and the convulsive pressure of his hand. Louisa read his fears for her future happiness in this strange family; and she retired to a melancholy pillow, alike weeping for the past and the future.

CHAP. IV.

Although sin is undoubtedly the most hateful thing in the world, yet vulgarity is the most disgusting; and that of Mrs. Deverell was rendered peculiarly disagreeable to Louisa, not only because it far exceeded any thing she had ever witnessed in extent, but might be considered a variety in the species, of peculiar flavour and extraordinary growth. She had never before witnessed it in a rich person; and the broad Yorkshire or Somersetshire which had reached her ear from a peasant or mechanic, was rather novel than disagreeable; but the gross ignorance, the vile English, the mean notions, and contracted ideas, of Mrs Deverell, were mingled with unfeeling selfishness, despicable meanness, and intolerable pride; the coarseness of her manners re-echoed the base sentiments of her heart; and the contemplation of either

was a terrible object to a being so differently constituted as Louisa. Yet the mother was better than her daughter, for she was rarely ill-humoured; whereas Miss Chester was malignant, petulant, and captious, adding those faults which are the offspring of indulgence, to those traits of the mother which nature had sown, and education confirmed.

It will be readily conceived by every person of feeling, especially those who have known, in their own persons, or those dear to them, the sorrows of dependence, how cruel, how difficult the situation of Louisa shortly became; but it is impossible to make them conceive how greatly her trials increased, from Mr. Richard Chester, who rendered himself an object of aversion to her, as much from his ill-behaviour to his mother, who, with all her faults, dearly loved *him*, as the disgusting affectation of his manners. His love was her dread and her torment, since every indication of it drew upon her anger from the mother, and scorn from the sister. When

she repelled his forwardness with becoming dignity, she was reproached with her pride, and told to remember "airs didn't become sitch as she;" and if at any moment she suffered these professions in tranquillity, she was reproved for her forwardness, and told, that "it was not likely Mr. Richard would take up with *her*; he might take warning from her father's fate, and see what marrying pretty beggars came to; it was one thing to chat to a girl, and another thing to marry her."

Louisa possessed a strong mind as well as a sweet temper, and she determined to sustain all the evils she endured with patience, until the return of that dear uncle who would be to her, she well knew, the parents she had lost; and it rarely happened that either vulgar scolding, or malicious insinuation, wounded her beyond bearing, except when her regretted, her idolized father—her beloved, her admirable mother, were reflected upon, or defamed; then would her cheek glow, her heart swell almost to bursting; scalding tears fell from

her lovely eyes, and sometimes a disjointed sentence, indicative of her feelings, burst from her trembling lips, which seldom failed to awe for a moment the despicable beings that had awakened it; for they felt in such moments the presence of superior mind, of injured innocence, and sunk before it.

Ever since the death of the elder Deverell, Mrs. Deverell and her daughter had been endeavouring to persuade her consort to take them up to London; but although they had so far encroached on his melancholy and taciturn temper as to leave him apparently without any right to term himself the master of the house, he yet stedfastly refused this request, generally urging the health of his son as the reason, although it was pretty generally conceived that the expence was his *true* motive.

In the course of the summer which introduced Louisa to his family, Mr. Deverell was doubly besieged on the one hand,

and robbed of his wonted excuse on the other; the amiable and heart-wounded girl attached herself with such sincere and active affection to the child, that under her humane vigilance he attained a degree of health and strength to which he had been hitherto a stranger; whilst his mind and memory likewise imbibed that knowledge necessary to his age. This active and useful kindness on the part of Louisa frequently awoke the coarse praises of Mrs. Deverell, who roundly declared, that she must say the girl earned double her meat; and would sometimes make her a tolerably handsome present of clothes, or pocket-money. But her uncle, though he evidently felt much more grateful than his lady, was apparently wounded by the subject, and always speedily escaped from it; and although, now and then, on particular occasions, a look of tearful gratitude, which was certainly dear to Louisa's feelings, told her that he was grateful, yet his habitual meanness prevented him from giving any

other proof, although his lady was not slow to remark the scanty wardrobe, and petty wants of his niece.

But whatever might be their emotions towards the sweet sufferer, those of the younger branches admitted only an increase, not change, of their primary sentiments. The early hours and long walks to which Louisa accustomed herself, for the sake of the little boy, operated beneficially on her own health; she regained her bloom, her form became more finished, her walk more agile and graceful; of course she became more hateful in Miss Chester's eyes, and more desirable in her brother's; and it was difficult to say whether the love of the one, or the hatred of the other, distressed her most; for the former was ever expressed either by the airs of purse-proud insolence, or libertine impertinence; and the only moments when the unhappy girl did not loath him as a disgusting fool, were those in which she trembled at him as a brutal one. Happily for her, he was much from home, or these

sweetly pensive walks, which were her only solace, would have been denied to her; as when at the Hall he never failed to intercept, intrude, and tease her perpetually.

When the days began to shorten, the ladies began their attack; and as Mr. Deverell's health was evidently very delicate, though he seldom complained, it was insisted upon that the best medical help was necessary; and Mrs. Deverell declared—"If he did not go, he would be the death of her; she knew what it was to lose one husband, and it would be hard indeed for her to lose another."

"I have no complaint, I assure you, save the bile at my stomach," said the provident spouse.

"And what's sorer than a bile, pray? haven't I had one on my arm, and don't I know it must be worse on one's stomach?" cried the intelligent lady.

She carried her point this time, and to the infinite relief of Louisa, it was settled that she should remain at home with little James; for although she possessed all the

curiosity natural to her age, yet she had been taught, by the sad experience of many months, that in her present situation all pleasure would be denied to *her*, and she was aware that many mortifications could not fail to be her portion from Miss Chester's hand, and much persecution from her conceited brother; and ever eagerly dwelling on the time which should restore her to her beloved uncle, she considered that in this lapse of peaceful time, she should gain a step towards the attainment of her only hope, and fondest wish—the power of throwing herself on his protection.

It was happy for Louisa that young Chester was at least as much of a fop as a lover, and that his desire to attain notoriety, or what he called, cut a "splash among the natives," operated so as to remain in town during the winter, as otherwise his addresses, if idle flattery and unmeaning or insidious professions can be so termed, would have been still more distressing to her than they had been. As it was, her winter passed quietly away, and

she enjoyed a few sweet hours, which she was enabled to steal from the multiplicity of work the cares of Mrs. Deverell had left, and devote to reading, which was ever her dearest amusement, and now her sweetest solace.

The library of Mr. Deverell had received few additions during the life of his father, but in that which had been her grandmother's dressing-room, Louisa found many valuable works, especially the poets and historians of *her* day, which now afforded not only a rich mental repast to the maturing mind and oppressed spirits of the lovely orphan, but renewed to her heart those lessons of religion and virtue—to her imagination those soarings of fancy and powers of intellect, so happily implanted by her parents, and which a life of melancholy dependence and ungenial society is more apt to render obtuse and evanescent, than even the severest immediate afflictions.

The good old clergyman too contributed much to her comfort during the ab-

sence of the family, though the dissimilarity of his feelings and pursuits rendered him a great stranger at the Hall in general: her interviews with him indeed often gave birth to sorrowful remembrances, and heart-rending comparisons, and she seldom parted from him without tears, yet such tears soothed and refreshed her bosom, and invigorated its virtues; they fell like the balmy drop of April weeping over the ravages of winter, yet reviving the blossoms of May.

With the return of the family returned every evil she had known in her first intercourse with them, and many were increased by the soil in which they had lately expanded. Mrs. Deverell had added pride to vulgarity, and her husband had been induced, from his increased expences, to double his cares, and add meanness to avarice. Miss Chester had greatly increased her *hauteur* and ill-temper, having experienced no small disappointment in finding it possible that a person of such powerful attractions as she conceived herself to pos-

sess, could have made her appearance in the world of fashion, without drawing a crowd of admirers; and as she principally imputed the coldness of those she had associated with to the vulgarity of her mother's manners, she was more inclined than ever to quarrel with the cause, and their mutual bickerings were equally disgusting to others, and disgraceful to themselves.

In a short time, however, the malignity of Miss Chester's temper became more decidedly pointed at Louisa, whose personal appearance was so much improved during their absence, that Miss Chester fancied she had grown handsome on purpose to thwart her views in the country, as effectually as her mother had done in town, and considered herself as enduring insult every time Louisa entered the place where she was.

Every bad passion gains upon us by indulgence, but especially envy; and this cruel and misguided young woman suffered hers so far to overcome her understanding, which was by no means a bad one, as to lead her to hate the very sight

of this amiable, unoffending girl, whom to injure or torment in some way, became at length as dear to her, and necessary for her comfort, as it would have been to sooth and reanimate the lovely blossom, had she been benevolent and good.

Miss Chester at this time became mistress of her fortune, which was handsome, and would have allowed her every means of self-gratification, and the power of greatly benefiting Louisa, whose heart, naturally warm and tender, expanded to every touch of kindness, and whose naturally strong and active mind rendered her peculiarly calculated for the duties as well as pleasures of friendship. The folly of Miss Chester's conduct, in thus "throwing this pearl" from her, at the very time she perceived it was "richer than all her tribe," was evidently as great as her guilt; to bestow and receive happiness was abundantly in her power, and in refusing *one*, she lost the *other*, for malignity is miserable even in its triumphs.

Shortly after the return of the family,

two events broke farther on the monotony of Louisa's servitude, both, alas! equally fatal to the little peace she might be said to retain; the first was the seizure of her little cousin by the measles; the second, that, during his confinement, a letter was brought to her from her uncle, by a young officer, who joined with the account given by the letter, in describing him as again suffering so severely in consequence of a wound received in a late conflict, as to give little hopes of his eventual recovery; and utterly to crush those which promised his speedy return.

CHAP. V.

The more pressing danger in which the little boy was placed, under Louisa's affectionate eye, prevented her from feeling so severely as she otherwise would the greater evil which threatened her, in the loss of *him* whom she justly deemed her only friend. It likewise deprived her of the enjoyment she might have experienced, from perceiving with how much tenderness he continued to regard her; and of the comfort his generous enclosure of bills, amounting to eighty pounds, would have given her, since they made her richer than she had ever been before. Naturally affectionate, and habitually attentive to all she loved, her whole mind was absorbed in the care due to that delicate blossom which had so lately flourished beneath her eye, and was the only human being whose

love was dear to her in the joyless circle where she was doomed to exist. Her youthful heart, divided from all the strong and tender ties of nature, had sought refuge from sorrow in transferring to this endearing relative those warm affections once cherished in a better clime; and she hung over him, as if once more her world was at stake, and once more she was severed from that world by the irresistible stroke of death; the heir of James Deverell expired in the arms of her whose rights his father had insidiously usurped—an awful, but unregarded lesson to the selfish father.

Yet that father wept; abundantly he wept over the lifeless remains of his son; and in the consciousness that Louisa deeply sympathized with his sorrows, and was truly a sufferer, from the unremitted attentions she had paid his boy, he treated her as a daughter, and leaned upon her as a friend.

Mrs. Deverell, though really sorry for the loss of her pretty child, (especially as he was getting up so finely,) took the

alarm; and forgetting all she owed Louisa for her love or her exertion—all that was due to the decencies of life in a season of mourning, behaved to her with the most outrageous insolence; to which her daughter added the most cutting contempt; her grief was ridiculed as affectation—her late attentions stigmatized as insidious cunning; if she was seen to mourn, it was observed that "hypocrisy was the soul of sentiment," by the young lady; to which the mother would add—"I hates crocodile tears:" and when either, honestly indignant, she restrained her feelings, or, piously resigned, she appeared composed before them, there never failed to be an observation of "bless me! is the farce finished so soon, Miss?" or, "fine feelings are very evanescent, I perceive, in romantic damsels."

At a different period of her life, Louisa might have despised these petty malignities; and, persevering in the strait forward path of virtue she was desirous of

pursuing, have looked down with calm dignity on her tormentors; but youthful sensibility alive in every nerve, the impetuous feelings of conscious honour lacerated by the rude hand of vulgar cruelty, in the very moment when it was bleeding from the stroke of fate, was not to be borne unmoved. Louisa alternately was the victim of impassioned grief and heart-consuming anguish; her situation became no longer endurable; she loathed the bread brought by the raven brood around her; and would have escaped from it, to the lowest servitude, had she conceived such a design compatible with female modesty, and her own duties as a niece, transferred by a dying father to her uncle's care: often would she resolve to throw herself at that uncle's feet, and beseech him to remove her from a house in which she was suspected and despised, in which her presence increased sorrow in others, and where she felt it impossible to endure that which was inflicted upon herself: but the mournful looks of her uncle forbade her to in-

crease his troubles; and the increased tenderness of his manners seemed to leave her without an excuse for a step of so much moment to her distant and real friend.

Whilst Louisa dragged on this wearisome existence, her uncle was indeed little happier than herself; the loss of his child was an affliction that increased in severity, the more he considered it; and the prosperity of his circumstances doubled the anguish of his disappointment; so that his usual occupations, which might be resolved into the term of counting his riches, became not only insipid, but tormenting to him: his health sunk with his spirits; and his person was so much altered, as to awaken the attention, we will not say the pity, of even Mr. Richard Chester, who earnestly recommended him to try company and change of scene.

To the latter the invalid by no means could be brought to consent; but recollecting that the young officer who had conveyed letters and presents from his brother was still in the neighbourhood, and that

his manners were very prepossessing, he consented to invite him to his house for a week or two, observing, that during his stay, other company would drop in of course.

Miss Chester did not object to lieutenant Mackenzie's visit, though he was only *lieutenant*. She had thought him, perhaps justly, the handsomest man she had ever seen, and from colonel Deverell's letters, knew him to be a man of family—a circumstance she deemed of consequence sufficient to set aside his want of fortune, so far as to render him an agreeable dangler in the country. It was the misfortune of the gentleman to go beyond her views, for Henry Mackenzie was not born to be a dangler. His person and manners were commanding and persuasive; he had seen much service, and wore almost a veteran air at twenty-five. He possessed singular talents for conversation, and more information than usually falls to the lot of young soldiers; there was in him that happy mixture of captivating suavity and martial frankness, which are the most en-

gaging characteristics of his profession, and which seem to say to every female heart—"I have a tear for your sorrow, a sword for your protection."

Miss Chester wanted neither, for she had no sorrow, and was equal to protecting herself; yet it was very plain that the young Caledonian "came, saw, and conquered," the very first day he dined at Mr. Deverell's table, and that all the lady's schemes of rendering him *her* slave ended in becoming *his* admirer.

Mrs. Deverell was rendered very uneasy, by a prudent matron in her party observing this predilection; nor was her trouble removed by the reply of a neighbour, who observed—"It was a suitable match, since one had what the other wanted." She said she didn't see that at all; for she thought Miss Chester, if she married a poor Scotchman, ought to have a lord, or a barrow-night, or somewhat o' that kind at least; she didn't doubt but the young man would soon see how to butter his bread, and remember blood without suet made a poor

pudding; but she should take care and outwit him; poor dear Mr. Chester's cheese-parings should never go into his porridge, she could assure him.

The threat was vain; for it never could apply to its object. High-souled, generous, and improvident, the idea of marrying for money had never crossed the Caledonian's mind, nor indeed marrying at all, except till he beheld Louisa, a pale and withered flower, to whom, perhaps, a kind and faithful heart might prove a shelter from the pitiless storm, which appeared, at this eventful period, to have bent even to the dust.

A farther acquaintance shewed this fair dependant not only a sufferer it would be sweet to relieve, but a companion it would be delightful to possess—nay, she became lovely, wise, virtuous, the most fair, intelligent, interesting of human beings; and when to this was added the most persecuted and oppressed, human nature could hold out no longer, and *malgre* the cautions of prudence, the lieutenant avowed the ho-

nest passion which inspired him, and in doing so, raised such a storm over the head of her he sought to protect, as again to crush the timid smiles and returning bloom his tender attentions had awakened.

Miss Chester became now outrageous, and her mother, although very desirous to get rid both of Louisa and the young officer, yet seconded her in every way possible of tormenting the former.

Mr. Chester, more annoyed than either of them, by the idea of losing Louisa, yet fearful of awakening the anger of her new admirer, should he dare to make dishonourable proposals, was as puzzled and angry as any licentious coward could be, under such circumstances, and fomented the rage and ill-humour of the women, in order that Louisa might be, in some way, thrown upon his kindness, fully persuaded, that if he really proposed marriage, she would accept him in preference to the poor soldier, whom he at once despised and feared.

Various were the schemes resorted to by each of the parties, for furthering their

wishes individually; but by none with equal success to that of Mrs. Deverell, who was naturally much less a schemer than any of her family: perceiving how much her husband continued to regret his son, and how little the general state of his family engaged his attention, she persuaded him that she was likely to renew his happiness, and by this means gained a hold upon him she had never enjoyed before during the period of their married life; *her* health, *her* wishes, *her* comforts, became the sole object of his consideration; and in the attentions she failed not to exact from him, he lost the sense of that corroding anxiety which consumed him.

The first use Mrs. Deverell made of her power was to insist on her husband's refusal of the lieutenant's offer, alledging not only the lieutenant's utter incapability of maintaining a wife, but adding—"You knows, if you give consent, he'll expect you to give something else; and that's what I shan't hear of now, becase charity begins at home."

"She has a trifle of her own, you know."

"Yes, but that mustn't be paid till she comes of age; if you goes to give it 'em now, why they'll want it over again then. No, no, I'll not hear of 'em marrying. I'll have no beggars' brats coming to our door to call my child cousin."

The lieutenant heard his denial with a calm countenance, indicative of quiet contempt. Naturally penetrative, and roused by love to its utmost solicitude, he scanned the whole party but too justly, and rendered their opposition only a pretext for urging more fondly and tenaciously his suit with Louisa.

That a young woman so situated should resign her heart, and even her conduct, to the guidance of so endearing a suitor, will excite no surprise, especially when her early habits and connexions are considered; like Le Fevre, "the name of a soldier sounded to her like the name of a friend." Alas! she had never known a friend in any other form; and although from infancy she had known the trials incident to a

soldier's life, she had happily witnessed also those circumstances of affection and virtue which to a certain degree soften its evils, and which rendered it, according to her conception, dazzled as it was by infant passion, or obscured by suffering, infinitely preferable to a situation where wealth appeared to foster every bad propensity, and thwart every virtuous enjoyment.

Yet Louisa would not, unsought, be won, and Henry was frequently astonished how one whose feelings were so acute, and whose sufferings were so cruelly reiterated, could endure, from day to day, the "proud one's contumely," when she could take refuge with one whom he could not believe she saw with indifference; but this astonishment subsided into increased admiration at the real dignity of her mind, and the fine perception of propriety, which in every action of her life pervaded her sentiments and informed her manners.

At length she was obliged to decide; he was called to join his regiment, and either she must be doomed to the indelicacy and

disobedience of a clandestine marriage, or endure a life which every hour rendered more irksome, and which would now combine with every other evil that which surpassed them all, *absence*, perhaps eternal absence, from him she fondly, purely loved.

As Louisa felt this to be impossible, for at eighteen the case is frequently deemed so under much less exculpatory circumstances, it was no wonder that she listened to her lover's plan, and consented to leave the house of her uncle; but she did not do so until she had arranged her plan of returning to the town from whence she came, and there taking up her abode with a servant of her father's, who was married there, from whence the lieutenant fetched her. She was married by bans published in the parish church where her father was interred, and the physician who had attended him gave her away—a circumstance which soothed her feelings, though it awoke many painful recollections.

With ardour and manly tenderness the enamoured bridegroom wiped her tears

and consoled her sorrows, fondly prophesying that they were now for ever ended. Alas! Louisa found in the future that these tears were but the presentiment of still greater anguish.

When some days were past, and the long-fettered mind of the young bride felt something like the "sober certainty of waking bliss," when the clamour of vulgar abuse, or the sneer of malicious contempt, no longer haunted her, and when a form dear as the light of heaven was indeed the only one that met her eye, she felt as if she dared to be blest, and as if Heaven itself, in pity to her sorrows, had sent, in her beloved Henry, a ministering angel to restore her peace; her mind expanded, her vivacity returned, she became not less charming than she was lovely, and wherever she appeared, became the centre of attraction. The enraptured Henry could not refrain from exhibiting the jewel he possessed, and for a few months, he ventured beyond the bounds, the *narrow* bounds of his income, in displaying his

treasure, and lavishing upon it whatever he could bestow.

But his pleasures were enlarged, his cares increased, by the birth of a son, who had scarcely visited the "glimpses of the moon" when his father was called suddenly to join his regiment in the West Indies. Over this parting we must cast a veil, for no power of words can do justice to it, although each for the other's sake sustained the conflict with all the fortitude in their power to command.

The period of Mackenzie's absence was shorter than could have been expected; but, alas! he returned the victim of disease, full of wounds received by the blowing up of the fort in which he fought with admirable but unavailing courage; his strength was exhausted, his frame emaciated, and he died a 'living death, in the excruciating torture inflicted by his bruises and wounds.

To apply every shilling they could amass to procure the best medical relief for his sufferings, was the first object of Louisa,

and it was her comfort to find it was possible, by this means, to procure a cessation of his tortures; and as she became of age soon after his return, it was a comfort to her, on receiving the trifle which was her only portion, to apply it to this precious purpose.

The affair was transacted by letter, and was neither attended by concession on the one hand, or reproach on the other, for time had but confirmed Louisa in her attachment to her husband, and shewn her the cruelty of her relatives in a stronger point of view, on the one hand, and on the other, Mr. Deverell had been rendered more sensible that he had no right to reproach her, as he had found that his wife had deceived him in his hopes of another child, and that Louisa had been driven from his house by every species of persecution ill-humoured malevolence could suggest.

During the absence of her beloved husband, Louisa had resided in an obscure village in the north, where she had enjoyed few opportunities of inquiring after her uncle, from whom she had never heard

since her marriage, and who she feared was either too offended with her to write, or had fallen the victim of those complaints under which he laboured three years before; but from the inquiries now made, it appeared that he had recovered from them, and again braved the field, in which he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, and was conveyed so far up the country, that the British army remained a stranger to his fate.

This melancholy news affected the spirits of Louisa exceedingly, and extended its baneful effects to her second offspring, which was from its birth sickly and delicate.

The increase of his family, and the partial amendment he experienced, induced poor Mackenzie to become extremely anxious for promotion, to which he was conscious of having claims; and as soon as Louisa could travel, he set out to London with his family, for the purpose of procuring it. Unhappily the tender object of his cares, and her new-born babe, demanded attentions, in bestowing which

his own health suffered severely; and a very short time served to prove, that a slow, but fatal malady, had settled on his weakened frame, and consigned him to an early grave.

In all the distraction of solicitude, that sometimes rose to frenzy, and sometimes sunk to despair, Louisa sought for help for her beloved; no pains, no expence was spared, within her power to command; and naturally timid as she was, for him she could gladly seek for help in every path where it was to be found. She now wrote humbly to her uncle, entreating his assistance, and representing, with too much truth, the severity of her situation. To her first and second letters she received no answer; but as postage was an object, her uncle replied to the third, by a cold and short refusal of assistance; to which was added a postscript by his lady, which was probably done without his knowledge, as the letter had evidently been re-opened for the purpose, which contained these words:—

"I hopes you wont go to truble Mr. Deverell any mor with your letters, being as how I shall burn 'em if you do; indeed I wonders at your impudens in riting three, knoin him as you do—as you made your bed, so you may lie in it; but howsomdever, as it's a hard site to see a hansom husbend pine down to a bag o' bones, and you were allis handy and well-behaved to me (more by half, though I say it, than Miss Chester), I shall send you a five pound note next week, by my son, Mr. Chester."

Even this scanty supply, thus insultingly bestowed, was thankfully received by a wife and mother so situated; but the hand which offered it tainted the gift far more than hers which bestowed it. Since the time in which Louisa had seen Mr. Chester, he had become a regular adept in that vice, an intercourse with the dissipated part of the world cannot fail to inculcate in persons of weak minds, indulged passions, and selfish, contracted principles; he beheld the painful situation of Louisa with pleasure, not only on the score of revenge,

but under the idea that she would now become an easy victim; and as his licentious eye devoured her elegant, though altered form, not less the votary of childish vanity, than of a more brutal passion, he considered how soon it might be in his power so to restore and embellish her person, as to render her the most dashing woman he knew.

The calm and sorrowful countenance of Louisa, illumined only at those moments when her eye glanced towards her beloved lord, and sought to shed a ray of comfort on him, gave little encouragement to the designs of the visitant; but remembering his mother's proverb, that "hunger breaks through stone walls," and his own adopted creed, that all women might be bought, he departed with an air of self-satisfaction, disgusting to Louisa, and somewhat alarming to the husband, who knew the world to which his innocent wife was a stranger, and trembled not for her fidelity, but her peace.

Mr. Chester did not visit them again

very soon, for reflection seemed to inspire awe in his mind; and the bright penetrating flash of Mackenzie's eye, as it shot through his memory and his conscience, appalled him; but inquiring one day after the invalid's health, from the mistress of the house, he learnt that he was much weaker, and he therefore magnanimously resolved not to delay his attack on the distressed wife much longer; accordingly, that very evening, after he had taken his wine with a gay dinner-party, just as Louisa had, with all the tender skill of a nursing wife, placed her wearied husband in his bed, Mr. Chester entered her little sitting-room, and, without even the formality of inquiries, congratulated himself on finding her alone.

Tenderness—the insidious language of compassion—the delicacy which disguises the vice it softens, and saps the virtue it would destroy, was happily no part of this man's character: he was aware of it, and therefore, in few words, and with a splen-

did display of generosity, insulted Louisa by an offer he misnamed protection.

Surprise, anger, and profound contempt, were expressed by her with the rapidity and indignation with which they naturally rose to her mind; but instead of allaying the passion she had the misfortune to inspire, they appeared to add fuel to the flame; and brutally catching her in his arms, he swore she never looked half so lovely in his eyes, and that he was determined to snatch her from the miserable prison where she so madly immured herself.

Terrified and enraged, yet Louisa forbore to scream, for every motion of her heart and conduct was so schooled by overruling tenderness for her husband, that even now she could guard herself from alarming him: her silence was misconstrued; she was compelled to speak aloud, and in a moment her insulter lay prostrate at her feet. The famished lion rushes not with more eagerness on his prey, than did poor Mackenzie, at the voice of his be-

loved, spring from his bed, and collecting all the powers of life, dart forth to her assistance, and lay low the dastardly assassin that would have destroyed his peace.

When Chester, inwardly uttering the curses he dared not vent, had crept down the stairs, Louisa threw herself, sobbing with fond agitation, into the arms of her husband, who, in the momentary strength he experienced from energies so powerfully awakened, was led to imagine himself almost miraculously restored; and although a few hours only served to renew every bad symptom with increased force, yet the impression remained the same upon his mind, and combined with the flattery every species of decline is liable to, to mislead him with fallacious hopes.

Within the last few days, he had been driven by the pressure of circumstances to endeavour to sell his commission, but he now resolved to weather the gale a little longer, in the hopes of outsailing his disease; and such was the cheerfulness with which he spoke, and so surprising had ap-

peared his exertion even to Louisa herself, that she allowed the voice of hope to penetrate her own sad heart, and illuminate the gloomy future. Indeed so truly, so entirely was she devoted to her beloved husband, whose affection and whose virtues shone brightest in the hour of affliction, and attached her to him beyond even all the first indulgencies of ardent passion displayed in the day of prosperity, that she was now wedded to him as by a tenfold chain, and even in those moments when she saw the utter impossibility in the clearest point of view, she yet never dared to expect his death, or contemplate her own situation under such a circumstance. It was an object so full of horror, she dared not look on it, lest madness should ensue; and even when her bleeding heart poured out its sorrows at the mercy-seat of Heaven, it shrunk from asking help for such a moment as that which was impending over her.

All the day after that which had been so dreadfully interrupted, the fever of poor Mackenzie was evidently heightened, not-

withstanding which, he spoke much more than usual, and bore the prattle of his lovely boy better than he was wont, his spirits rising as we have mentioned; but at night his breathing was so much worse, that he found it impossible to lie down, though he felt very desirous of obtaining a little sleep.

Louisa proposed his sitting on the sofa, and laying his head on her bosom, a posture to which he was alike inclined by the desire of ease and the sentiment which absorbed him. Soon after he was placed according to his wishes, she observed, with gratitude to Heaven, that his fever subsided, and he sunk into a gentle dose.

Having never closed her eyes for a moment the preceding night, and feeling her spirits more composed than they had been for some time, she kissed his forehead, and leaning her head against the wall, after giving a tender glance towards her sleeping babes, fell into a sound and much-wanted slumber.

The first beams of a wintry sun were darting into the humble apartment, and the elder boy had repeatedly called, in a soft voice, as taught by necessity and affection, "Are you awake, mamma?" when the mother did indeed awake, and tenderly pressing her sleeping partner still closer to her bosom, whispered—"How are you, my love?" There was no answer; yet the breathings of sleep were not heard; the forehead she pressed was icy cold, and as she moved the arm that had embraced her, it fell lifeless on the couch.

The husband, the father, the friend, the lover, was no more! The hour of horror, of unutterable anguish was come, and it fell as terribly as if it had arrived even in the midst of health and enjoyment. But Heaven in mercy gave temporary insensibility, and thus preserved the wretched widow from becoming the frantic maniac.

CHAP. VI.

Who shall bound the powers of human endurance? or say to sorrow, "hitherto shalt thou go, but no further;" and "here shall death or madness stay thy hand?" Hearts do not break even by excess of anguish, as many a sufferer knows, although the slow, consuming hand of care may indeed, with a little help from disease, lead us through a lingering death to an untimely tomb.

Lieutenant Mackenzie, like the generality of truly brave men, had ever been kind, conciliating, and humane to his soldiers, and he was beloved by them with enthusiasm. One of them, who had been a temporary servant of his, had not long before got his discharge, and having married a decent maid-servant, was now attempting to begin life as a green-grocer. Poor William lost no opportunity of paying attention to one he ever designated

his good master, but he had frequently betrayed such marks of sorrow on perceiving his altered form, that Louisa had been fearful of late of admitting him into his presence; but on this eventful morning William was determined to intrude, some unusually fine endive having fallen into his wife's hands, which he determined on presenting to his master, who was fond of it.

On this grateful errand the compassionate servant entered the chamber of death, and beheld a spectacle to harrow the very heart of pity. The corpse of his beloved master was now extended on the floor, and over it lay his mistress, apparently lifeless. The elder child was dragging a counterpane over them, in the belief that both his parents slept, and that his feeble efforts would protect them from the cold, and endeavouring, by the gentlest persuasions, to sooth the other babe, now faintly crying for its accustomed food from the milkless breast of its mother.

Oh, Deverell! cold-hearted miser! why wert thou saved from such a scene as this?

why did it blast the kind, untutored heart that knew to pity, but had not power to help?

Vain exclamation! every human being can help its fellow-creature; in the hour of sickness, in the day of poverty, how welcome are the efforts of the humblest of our fellow-creatures, when, led by compassion or kindness, they sympathize in our distress!—William dispatched a messenger for his wife; and calling the master of the house, they removed the corpse before they applied the usual restoratives to the widow: affection inspires skill as well as courage, and this humble, but sympathetic pair, applying all their powers to managing aright the higher, but nearly deranged intellects of the bereaved Louisa, succeeded in engaging her so far with her helpless little ones, that for them she endured existence—for them she bent her knees, and prayed for resignation.

Of course Louisa became, from this period, literally "steeped in poverty to the very lips;" and although she struggled to

support herself and little ones by taking in plain work, yet the sickness of the younger rendered her unable to pursue it. The fright, as well as sorrow, she had sustained from the manner in which the poor lieutenant died, had deprived her of the natural food of her youngest child, and its fragile form sunk beneath the change of sustenance, and in less than a month it slept beside the father, and in its funeral expences exhausted the last property of the wretched mother.

Long confinement, and the want of nutritive food, began now to make ravages in the blooming boy, which was her only care, her only hope; but this circumstance probably preserved Louisa from total despair, or rather that total despondency which destroys all power of exertion; for his sake she endeavoured to procure employment of a nature more lucrative than that which William's wife was able to gain; and subduing all the repugnance she felt to meeting the rude gaze or unfeeling inquiry of strangers, and making herself as neat as

her scanty wardrobe, which was reduced to a single black gown, would admit, she pursued the advice of her landlady, and applied at a genteel house in Hanover-square for muslin work.

A governess, of foreign extraction, came down to speak with her, and give the necessary directions; and though trembling with agitation, from the novelty of her situation, and the distress which led to it, yet the unhappy widow felt too thankful, in the hopes of speedy relief, not to exert herself to receive it as she ought; and endeavouring to forget herself, she sought her employer's protection, only as a person capable of the work she undertook.

After measuring her, with a look of mingled surprise and suspicion, the person addressed her with—" Are you de person dat works muslin, dat Mrs. Newton recommended?"

" Yes, ma'am."

" Are you a widow—an officer's widow?"

" I am, ma'am."

" Dear me, you seem vey young—vey

young indeed. Are you sure you are a widow?"

"I am but too certain of my misfortune."

"Well, you don't need to cy; cying does no good. I suppose you've no children?"

"I have a little boy, ma'am; and——"

"And vat—vat besides?"

"I have just had the misfortune to lose one."

"Oh, dat's no misfortune at all, I tink."

"Pray, ma'am, is that the muslin I have to work?"

"Yes, dis is it; and dis is de pattern: you must do it vey well. Are you sure you are a widow?"

Louisa stept back; and a quick blush of momentary vexation rose on her pallid cheek.

"You don't need to look angy, young woman; dere is tousands of young women like you, dat are never married to de gentlemen dey live wit; but in dis famly we are vey particular; and if you behave well, and do your work reasonable,

we may be geat friends to you; and, you see, you look so young, dat I tought, pehaps, you were unfortunate."

"I *am* a widow, madam, the widow of a British officer, and the daughter of one," cried Louisa, sobbing in very agony.

"Indeed! what was your name?"

"Deverell."

"Where did you come from?"

"I was born in Derbyshire."

"But where was your father born?"

"At Cleveland Hall, in Worcestershire."

"What was your mother's name?"

"Forrester, ma'am."

After a moment's silence, the cruel and indelicate interrogator opened her mouth to begin a farther inquisition, but Louisa, mustering all her courage, entreated to have her farther orders respecting her work; but just as she answered with the question of "Who was your husband?" a visitant in the house passed by them, and her attention was for a moment diverted from the widow, as turning to the lady,

she exclaimed—"Dear Miss Groves, I tink you have got a new gown on!"

"Indeed I have not," said the lady, casting, as she spoke, a look of pity towards Louisa.

"Is it an old gown den?"

"Certainly not an old one neither."

"Pe'haps it is dyed, Miss Groves?"

"I never wear dyed gowns."

"Did you buy it in London?"

"No."

"Den you bought it in de country?"

"I did not."

"Oh, you had it given you, I suppose? I dare say your brother sent it you."

"Upon my honour, he never saw it."

"Dear me! how strange! I can make nothing of it; pray how did you get it?"

"Ha, ha, ha! to save your life, I will tell you; a friend brought it me from Ireland."

This, however, was by no means sufficient information, and in order to gain further, she gave hasty orders to Louisa, and followed Miss Groves. It was happy

for the widow that this lady, who was so expert at "putting the question," which might be justly designated the *torture*, had met with a second subject, as it proved to her that it was merely an idle and peculiar habit, and not meant for the purpose of insulting as well as sifting her, and she concluded likewise that the ease with which she had spoken of a state of existence utterly abhorrent to her feelings, arose from that deficiency of modesty, which she had understood from her dear Mackenzie was too common amongst females even of high character on the continent.

Arming herself with these reflections, she determined to persevere in the plan she had laid down; but, alas! on returning her work, she found Miss Larolle was not less an adept in questioning than in what is metaphorically termed screwing; she beat down even her modest claims to reward for her labour only the more because they were such, and perceiving that she undervalued her own talents, determined to sink them still lower.

Happily Miss Groves overheard the conversation, being attracted by the forlorn, yet interesting appearance of Louisa, and she contrived to slip a half-guinea into her hand in a manner which admitted not refusal, as she instantly disappeared. With this, and a few shillings taken for three days of incessant labour, she returned heartless and dispirited to weep over her pining boy, to consider herself as reduced to literal beggary, and while she felt grateful for a stranger's alms, yet shocked that she should have received it.

It was in this state of deplorable existence, earning by extraordinary exertion one day what was spent the next in some morsel to tempt the sickly appetite of her darling—denying herself almost subsistence, lest she should increase the debt she was yet unable to pay, that she was first seen by the baronet in the manner we have related. Ever entertaining a fear of Chester, she seldom ventured beyond the immediate precincts of her neighbourhood, except to obtain work, which was never

granted with kindness, or paid for with liberality. William and his wife were the only human beings that sympathized in her affliction, and in their desire to relieve it, they were liberal so far beyond their powers, that she was compelled to disguise her wants from them, especially as their own expences were increasing, and she could not bear to rob their warm and willing hearts of the little which their own offspring would soon claim.

Yet recluse as she was, the fine form and sunken fortunes of Louisa had attracted attention, and various insidious letters and marked attentions had obtruded upon her, which were all rejected with silent contempt or renewed sorrow. The near view of death she had sustained, and the consciousness that life had no longer any good for her, probably strengthened her virtue, and led her to consider another world as her only place of rest and refuge; but her fond affection to her departed husband at this period would alone have led her to

sicken at the thought of any other connexion.

Such was the woman, who, when she was nearly as dead to hope as lost to comfort, was found and relieved by sir Francis Mowbray, whose bounty she applied with as much avidity to the payment of her debts, as to the restoration of her child, who in less than a month was restored to full bloom from the pure air of Highgate, and the good nursing of a mother who devoted every moment to his welfare, and in her joy at beholding him thus restored, and participating with him the common comforts of life, became herself comparatively restored also, and capable of considering how to provide for futurity in some way consistent with her education and her family connexions.

CHAP. VII.

When sir Francis had learnt who Louisa was, he felt pained with the idea that it was impossible to restore her to the Deverell family, without rendering her as wretched as she had ever been; he therefore inquired further after the family of her husband, and learnt that he was an only son, and had no relation nearer than two male cousins, one of whom was in the church, the other in the army; they were both young, and though of excellent character, could scarcely be deemed proper protectors for a distant relative of Louisa's description. To the former, however, he applied to inquire if there were any female relatives of the family left in Scotland, with whom the widow and her son could be rendered acceptable inmates? being determined to finish the good work he had so successfully begun, by rendering

future life free at least from pecuniary difficulties.

The gentleman to whom this letter was addressed was on the point of marriage, and in his reply to sir Francis, he not only entered with the most lively sensibility into his cares for the widow of a relative whom he loved, though parted from each other in childhood, but earnestly entreated her at present to accept of a home in his house —a request in which his bride united; and it appeared from the manner in which this accommodation was offered, that they were blest with the means of blessing.

The refuge thus offered was indeed sweet to Louisa's mind, as the recognition of a friend; but knowing that this gentleman, like her own beloved Henry, was only the son of a younger brother, and but very lately returned from the East Indies, she saw rather the same generous will to do good which had actuated her own noble-spirited husband, than the power which his letter allowed her to suppose. She therefore would have greatly preferred any mode

of silent industry, compatible with her powers, which might have enabled her to struggle, until some tidings could be learnt of colonel Deverell, to venturing on the bounty of this unknown but generous relative; and rendered perfectly easy as to the views of the baronet, she now, with modest frankness and dignified humility, requested to see him, being anxious to submit her judgment and feelings to his consideration, and her conduct to his decision.

But when this interview indeed took place, the widow found it was by no means so easy to consult her benefactor as she had conceived. Good and kind as the baronet ever was, yet even his intimate friends did not deem him a man easy of access, and an air of constraint he wore on approaching Louisa, tended to diminish the little courage she possessed. She felt a kind of homage due to him, as one who had a right to dispose of her; and was more ready to receive his commands, than

canvass her own sentiments, and explain her own wishes.

Whilst she sat debating with herself in what manner to mention her desires, or effectually to conceal them, her boy ran into the room, with a handful of new-gathered flowers for the good gentleman—his only, but his welcome gift. He was a child of uncommon beauty; and the exquisite bloom which new-found health had grafted on his delicate skin, rendered his face almost cherubic in its loveliness, whilst his agility and animation gave intelligence and grace to every motion. Sir Francis started, and gazing as he took him on his knee, exclaimed—"Heavens! what a change is this!"

"Oh yes, 'tis indeed a change!" cried the mother, forgetting all her fears, and bursting into tears of joyful gratitude as she gazed on her son; then adding, with rapidity—"I owe my child, my all, to your goodness, sir; direct me, guide me, as you please. I will instantly set out

wherever you would have me. To whatever corner of the earth I wander, still shall I think of you, and bless you; and never shall these little hands be held to heaven, without joining in a mother's, prayer for blessings on our benefactor."

As Louisa thus, with an animation and energy that appeared altogether new in her character, gave vent to the ardent feelings that glowed in her bosom, sir Francis gazed upon her with an air of one who had never seen the commanding form of beauty, the soul-ennobling mien of virtue, until now, and his heart did homage in its turn. His mind, though a man that knew the world, and knew human nature too, did not for a moment admit the thought that a heart so warm, a sensibility so acute, might be led to feelings less pure, and melted in the flame awakened by its virtues. No! he revered her purity as much as he admired her beauty; but without owning it even to his own heart, he felt the contemplation dangerous, and hastily snatching the child to his bosom, and im-

printing a fond kiss on his ruby lips, he departed, without exchanging a single word on the subject which brought him there; leaving Louisa puzzled and distrest, by the evident perturbation he evinced.

At sir Francis's second interview, in which he behaved with polite rather than humane attention, having schooled his sensibilities into the calm propriety demanded by the occasion, it was decided that Louisa should accept the invitation of her kinsman, and set out for Nottinghamshire immediately, where she should consult with him on the mode necessary for her own comfort, as well as subsistence in future life; Sir Francis entreating, with the air of a suppliant, that she would not decide hastily on any plan, and that she would be particularly mindful of the claims colonel Deverell had upon her; and on no possible consideration adopt any scheme that might be thought derogatory to her family.

Much as Louisa shrunk from increasing her obligations to sir Francis, yet conscious that she had not expended a single shilling

unnecessarily in his last gift, she could not avoid receiving the bill he offered for the expences of her journey; but the manner in which she took it indicated the sincerity of her desire to become independent, and sir Francis inwardly determined to add this to the comforts he wished her to enjoy.

As early as possible after this visit she set out by the mail-coach; and had the satisfaction to find both herself and child better for their journey, and to meet with a reception so truly kind and hospitable, in which so much general benevolence and good-will was so blended with that peculiar attachment the Highland clans ever exhibit towards the most distant branches of their family, that she found herself more settled than she had believed it possible for one so bereft and so dependent could possibly become.

Not so sir Francis. Neither pleasure nor business could divert his mind a moment from thinking on the distant objects who had of late excited such an overweening interest in his heart. The mother in all

her sorrow *now*, and *now* in all her charms, rose to his memory, grateful eloquence inspiring her lip, and sparkling in her eye; and if this image passed away, it was succeeded by the graceful boy, and his present of flowers. "Whose hand," said sir Francis, "shall strew flowers on *my* downward path? who shall rescue *my* name from oblivion?" Yet a thousand and a thousand times a-day he determined *not* to think on these things; but in despite of his resolution, he found himself perpetually, like the object of his thoughts, exclaiming, with a sigh—"What can I do?"

CHAP. VIII.

After the first ebullition of affectionate welcome, the first glow of admiration and pity had subsided, and the kind couple had resumed their ordinary habits, Louisa found what might be truly termed leisure for mourning; and every thing around her contributed to awaken that poignant regret natural to the widowed heart. Mr. Mackenzie greatly resembled her lamented husband in his person, and was still more like him in sentiments and manners. Ardently attached to his own country, he spoke of it as the land of heroes, the abode of independence, the nurse of virtue; and as her Henry had done before him, he delighted to describe to his young wife the commanding and beautiful scenery amongst which he was born, and on which his memory, combining with his enthusiasm, bestowed tints beyond even the exquisite realities.

Often as he spoke of those lakes and mountains, glens and vallies, traversed in his boyish days, whose names were familiar to Louisa, describing probably the same youthful feat, the same poignant delight, she had listened to before, the dreadful dream of the past would vanish for a moment from her sight, and she yet seemed to hear the voice which had charmed her opening heart, and re-live the scenes of her own bridal hours. But when truth flashed on her mind—when she felt herself a widow—ah! what a pang was that! how did her inmost soul shrink from the contrast! how tremble as she gazed on the happy wife, and repeat to herself the melancholy difference that existed between them.

Still more severe was her suffering, when the state of Mrs. Mackenzie's health, her comfort, or even her amusement, became the object of the kind husband's solicitude, in moments of awakened tenderness, of affectionate anxiety; again she beheld *her* Henry—again she sobbed in all the agonies

awakened by grateful memory and bitter regret; and hiding herself from every eye, indulged the lamentations of a bereaved spirit in sorrow that bordered on despair.

Her kind entertainers, not less delicate than generous, perceived, with the truest sympathy, the severity of these emotions, by the languor and delicacy apparent in her health, and forbore as much as they were able from exciting them. With all the zeal of friendship, and the meekness of piety, the good man exerted himself as her spiritual pastor, and endeavoured so to renew and awaken the consolations of Christianity in her heart, as to reconcile her to the Almighty dispensation, and enable her to look forward with hope and peace. He endeavoured to engage not only her feelings, but her faculties, in close attention to the contemplation of divine things; and considering that he had himself been hitherto too much in the world for the abstraction suitable for his studies as a divine, and that occasional retirement for sacred

contemplation is beneficial for every Christian, he with pleasure resigned himself to the interesting duty of dedicating a considerable portion of every day to reading and explaining the Scriptures to his wife and their widowed guest.

Happily the former was a young woman of strong and penetrative mind, whose attachment to him would alone have induced her to comply with his wishes, but whose good sense, as well as her early-instilled principles, led her to see the necessity of looking beyond this vale of tears, even in the day of enjoyment; and whose very blessings led her to adore the donor, and humbly seek to perform his will. She was an orphan, in possession of a handsome fortune, which she had bestowed on a good and superior man, agreeably to her own ideas, but not those of her relations, who, on the arrival of Louisa, had ventured to prophesy that "*she* was only the beginner of a train of northern connexions, which in time would swarm like the locusts, and devour the land."

Our young widow was beginning to emerge from the clouds of sorrow which had obscured her mind, and to practise that rational resignation demanded by religion, when these insinuations wounded her ear, and roused her again to the considerations which, on her arrival, had entirely occupied her, and a blush of shame rose to her cheek, when she recollected how long she had indulged in fruitless sorrow, and submitted to eat the bread of dependence, at a time when her health was in a great measure re-established, and that of her son perfected. She feared lest the enjoyment of ease and the comforts of affluence had unfitted her for exertions it was her duty to make, and she fervently besought her Heavenly Father to support and guide her in the thorny path he had ordained her to tread, assured that the same Power which had led her through the greatest of all possible trials, would support her in the lesser evils which awaited her.

Full of wise resolutions, but undeter-

mined as to the mode of exertion, she sought her friends, and carefully concealing the cruel whisper which had indeed roused her more immediately to this consideration, she earnestly besought their attention to a subject of so much moment.

"The good gentleman who first introduced us to each other," said her friend, "wishes you to accept an annuity from him, which will enable you to board in some cheap county, aware that your delicacy will accept no more than your necessities demand. I have his instructions for making you this offer."

"I cannot accept this! Bitter, very bitter was my distress when I first became the object of his bounty!"

"In case of your objection to this plan, he is willing to assist you in purchasing, or beginning a genteel boarding-school."

"Excellent man! for *this* I shall be truly thankful, for it will, I trust, enable me to repay him."

"Then, my dear cousin, though I shall be truly loth to part with you, especially

at a time when my wife is naturally desirous to retain you, yet it is my duty to inform you, that an establishment of this description is now advertised at Ashbourne in Derbyshire."

"Merciful Providence! the very place where I was born, and where I have often wished to retrace the steps of infancy! Oh, sir, close your labour of love to me by taking me thither!" So thither they went.

A chaise contained the party, which included little Henry, now a fine, sun-burnt boy, the lilies being displaced by wholesome exercise in the open fields, while the roses of his complexion glowed with double ardour; his innocent prattle beguiled the way to his anxious, abstracted mother, who, however desirous of obtaining the situation she sought, yet felt all the fears natural to a young woman inexperienced in the plan she adopted, and conscious that the charge was one of the highest responsibility, and that she was venturing the property of another in the undertaking; conscious likewise that the circumstances

of her past life were liable to animadversion, and her present dependence to misconstruction, and that except in her dear companions, she had no friend or adviser, and that her separation from them would alone be a severe affliction.

She was torn from this painful contemplation by their arrival in the vicinity of Dovedale, and her good kinsman's exclamation of welcome to the mountains which environ it, though he called them pretty pigmies, in comparison to the lofty Bens and proud Trossacks of his own country; they were, however, sublime as well as beautiful in the eyes of the ladies, who gladly left the carriage to view the nearer features of this far-famed glen; and even Louisa forgot alike the sorrows of the past and the solicitudes of the future, as she traced the silvery windings of the Dove through this romantic solitude, or the bold rocks that skirt its banks, and rear their fantastic forms in alternate terror and beauty o'er the broken pathway or the ridgy mountains.

Mrs. Mackenzie, being far advanced in her pregnancy, took the arm of Louisa, and walked slowly forward, while her spouse guarded the sportive child from danger, and sought for her the easiest path. As he was winding round a little promontory, with Henry in his hand, they perceived a solitary rambler before them, who appeared less absorbed in contemplation of the scene around him, than of his own feelings. His arms were folded, his steps slow, his head rested on his breast, and his eyes were fixed on the ground.

At this moment the ladies proposed sitting down on the knoll of rock they were passing, and their guide approved the wish, as he felt averse to overtaking, or in any way disturbing the sequestered wanderer, who was evidently no knight of romance. His delicate consideration was, however, thwarted by the child, who breaking from his hand at the moment he provided his lady with a seat, bounded after the stranger, and before his friend could overtake him, had taken a view of the half-concealed

face, which the instantly welcomed with a scream of joy, crying—"Oh, I thought it was you, that I did! I know'd I cou'dn't forget you, sir."

The stranger started, gazed for a moment at the boy with a bewildered air, and exclaiming, "Pshaw! it is impossible!" rather angrily, would have stept on, but the arms of the child circled his knees, and looking at him more kindly, he said—"Who do you think I am, my little fellow?"

"Oh, I know very well; it was you that gived mamma the money, and did every thing for Henry. You are the good, *good* gentleman that I say my prayers about every morning, that mamma cries about so. Oh yes, I know you, for all you look white. Have you been ill? I don't like that you should be ill; no, I don't."

As the sweet boy spoke, his little hands pressed more closely the knees they grasped, and his eyes filled with tears; those hazel eyes, so like his mother's, now bore their strongest, their most touching resemblance. Doubtless she was herself in

the neighbourhood; in a moment she might be before him; the thought displaced the paleness which had struck even the eye of infancy, and the baronet's cheek glowed with an indescribable confusion.

The clergyman's approach revealed the mystery of Henry's appearance, and the gentlemen soon became known to each other, and sir Francis learnt of course that Louisa was nigh them, and what was her determination respecting the future; and before they reached the ladies, he had somewhat recovered from the disagreeable sensations which oppressed him. On approaching the object he at once wished and feared to meet, the surprise, pleasure, and trepidation visible in Louisa appeared to banish his pain, and, as if in despite of himself, he looked gratified and happy.

If these were the first emotions she inspired, how much did they increase upon him as he viewed the staple improvement visible in her health and manifest in her person, which, though slender, was no longer meagre, but displayed a form moulded

by the hand of grace, and a face finished in beauty, yet retained those traces of which it might be said "affliction had touched her looks with something heavenly!" Nor were her manners less indicative of the happy change produced by ease of circumstance and a constant intercourse with polished and enlightened society. He soon perceived that she was not only elegant, but well-informed; that she combined with that happy choice of words which, united to musical softness of voice, becomes charming as eloquence, a playful humour, at times so brilliant, that it might be denominated wit.

In a short time, the worthy baronet dismissed the philosophy, the struggles of ten long months, and forgot that there was a single obstacle in the way of his wishes—forgot what he had bade himself remember so incessantly, that his health and spirits had sank beneath the severity of the lesson;

"Yet still the world prevail'd, and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn;"

and on the following morning, the good baronet thought "he was himself again;" but on this morning he was called upon to act, for the scheme of taking the school would be entered upon, and in that case, sir Francis felt that a new barrier would be raised by his pride to his passion. But other delicacies, other fears, than those suggested by unworthy passions, actuated the refined and deeply-revolving bachelor; he wished not to owe to gratitude that which he desired to receive from love alone. On this subject his feelings were acute, his experience imperfect, and his ideas purely speculative. He felt as if he honoured Louisa so much for her love, and the fond regret she evidently felt for her husband, that in changing her love even for himself, she would forfeit his esteem, and that sated passion would shrink from its degraded object. He remembered that he had told himself a thousand times not to marry a widow, lest her exhausted heart should be unable to return the ardent love *he* should experience for the woman on

whom he bestowed his hand, and yet he was now about to offer himself to one whose heart had evidently not regained even tranquillity, and who had been drawn only nearer to the object of her affections by sufferings almost unprecedented, and by merit almost unequalled—one still much younger than himself, a stranger to the world in which she would be called to move—one who might involve him in those troubles which rose from her inexperience, without blessing him with that boon of affection which consoled the moment of inquietude.

But she was going; she was almost gone; once settled in that confounded school, it would be impossible for the last of the Mowbrays to take her thence. Besides, she was a gentlewoman; she was young, lovely, grateful, tractable—nay, more, prudent, pious—one who might be the matchless mother of a noble race.

In speechless agitation, the baronet seized the arm of the good clergyman at the very moment he was stepping into his car-

riage, where Louisa was already seated, and drawing him into the parlour of the inn, declared, in few and hurried words, his high regard for Louisa, and his determination to offer her his hand.

This information was received with pleasure, but no symptom of vulgar surprise mixed in the calm dignity which congratulated his own feelings as he rejoiced in the welfare of his kinswoman. The widow of a Mackenzie was, he thought, a fit match for the highest rank, and fortune he deemed a secondary object. He pleased the baronet with this self-respect, but he awoke fears for his success, which had not yet entered into his catalogue of anxieties.

But although surprise might be repelled in the breast of one whose family dignity or just admiration of her rendered the baronet's conduct merely natural, it affected Louisa in a very different manner. The cares of a mother, anxious for her future peace, had rendered her humble as well as obedient in childhood, and the cruel situation of her youth had confirmed the les-

son. During that short but eventful period, when at "stern necessity's supreme command," she had held a little intercourse with the wealthy, she had found them unyielding and haughty, and therefore the whole experience of her life led her to consider such condescension as this little short of the miraculous; but it was not therefore agreeable; it called for her gratitude, but it met not with her wishes; even if she had not found her heart still buried in her husband's grave, her sense of a desire for independence, that dormant pride, which, blending in noble and delicate minds, becomes dignity, and is compatible with humility and modesty, seemed to forbid her acceptance of so vast a debt; for she had yet to learn that "the grateful mind, in owing, owes not."

Happily Louisa was, at this eventful period of her life, in the society of those who were wise to discern, and gentle to lead her in the path most desirable to herself and invaluable to her child. Placing the lovely pleader in her arms, her friend told

him to beg his mother to be merciful to him and to herself, and to remember that even his father would bless the benefactor of those so dear to him.

Louisa wept, as she thought, with more intensity of sorrow than she had ever wept before, but she promised obedience to the dictates of friendship and the voice of maternal duty.

When she was more calm, she was told that a cold, reluctant consent, an averted eye, and smothered sigh, were poor returns for the generous affection offered by a man whose noble nature, not his youthful passion, had thus distinguished her, and who, while his tenderness and delicacy spared her from the confession of reciprocal feelings, would yet be fully aware and deeply sensible of that heartless welcome which indicated aversion.

"Aversion!" exclaimed Louisa, "aversion! do you take me for a monster? aversion to the man who, like a ministering angel, visited me in the cell of anguish, and turned my night to day! who gave me

back from the jaws of the grave my only child, the image of my Henry! Oh no! no! no! I revere, I honour, I love him!"

At this instant the door opened; the baronet entered; Louisa, under the agitation thus awakened, with all the tide of grateful feeling rushing upon her heart, and deeply blushing with the consciousness of what had passed, turned instantly towards him, and with trembling eagerness, placed both her hands in his, at the same moment sinking on her knee, and bursting into tears. Sir Francis, with a look of tender alarm, instantly caught her in his arms, and with faltering voice told her that the words he had caught on his entrance were the dearest to his heart ever uttered since his birth, and they were indelibly engraven there.

When the burst of feeling had subsided, the baronet was happy, and Louisa was not unhappy; she returned home with her friends, but was soon after visited by her generous lover, who, now that he had silenced, if not conquered, his scruples, regained his health, and dwelt

with avidity on all those circumstances which rendered his marriage most eligible—a mode of conduct equally consistent with wisdom and happiness, and although it was not possible to carry it into full effect, yet every hour he passed in the society of the forlorn and helpless being he had chosen, rendered him more satisfied with his choice.

The widow endeavoured to forget she was one; and although the person and manners of her cousin, from their resemblance to the departed, rendered him of all others the least desirable for such an affecting task, she yet consented to be married by him; and thus entered the holy pale under the most respectable and auspicious circumstances.

When the hour of parting with this dear family arrived, the perturbed bosom of the bride found relief in tears, which were too natural to excite surprise or blame, but which she cónquered as soon as she was able, and pursued her journey, with her noble protector, her affectionate husband,

with a composed countenance, and a subdued emotion, arising from that remembrance of the past which the present naturally excited.

CHAP. IX.

The family mansion of the Mowbrays, called Sefton Park, situated on the border of Worcestershire, had received many improvements from the hands of sir Francis, who had been its possessor ever since the conclusion of his minority; and it was at this time equally magnificent, elegant, and comfortable, combining every convenience with every beauty.

As Louisa approached this dwelling, and received a warm welcome to it as the future mistress, she was ready, for a moment, to doubt the reality of the scene in which she performed so distinguished a part, and to ask herself if it were not all a dream? But the noisy delight of Henry, by calling for restraint, awakened her to a sense of what was due to her husband and herself, and she received the welcome of her household with an air of such affable dignity

and tranquil satisfaction, as to assure them all, that although report had styled their lady a beggar, education and nature had formed her to add lustre even to rank. But how highly was Louisa gratified, how happily surprised, when, shortly after, the clergyman of the parish called to pay his respects, and, hung on his arm, feeble, but still healthy, she beheld the venerable friend of her youthful sorrows, the revered Mr. Bailey.

Darting forward, she caught the good man's hand, and imprinted on it a daughter's kiss. Sir Francis was surprised, but gratified, as the good old man, with tearful eyes, called on God to bless her, and devoutly thanked his divine preserver that he had lived to see the child of his beloved Edward Deverell in a situation worthy of her family and her merits.

It appeared that the son of this gentleman was the rector of the neighbouring village of Sefton, and the old man, incapable of his parochial duties, and disgusted with the family who were unfortunately at

the head of his parish, had lately come to end his days among his grandchildren, and thus became the happy means of removing the prejudice the neighbouring gentry were beginning to entertain against sir Francis's bride, and of giving to her, and receiving from her; support and kindness.

Louisa visited not the bright domain which surrounded her, nor even laid her head upon her splendid couch, until she had written to honest William and his wife, with an enclosure suited to the bounty of her lord and her own benevolent gratitude.

The happiness she experienced in this recompence of invaluable services, glowed on her cheek, and inspired her with such a warm desire of contributing to the felicity of her husband, that she never had appeared so engaging, or been even so dear to him as now ; and he felt as if he would not have exchanged his helpless, pining, widowed *protegée*, " for a world of one entire and perfect chrysolite ;" but yet he found too soon, that a world of more

corruptible substance had the power to tease him.

Various cabals and various reports circulated in the country, in despite of Mr. Bailey's assertions, or even connected with them, which wounded the delicacy, or hurt the pride, of the baronet; especially as, in some instances, families with whom he had been long connected kept aloof from visiting him, or looked as if in doing it, they bestowed an honour on the object of his choice; and those who were more friendly, affected an air of patronage to his lady, still more offensive to his feelings.

The ingenuousness of lady Mowbray's nature, the simplicity, sincerity, and humility of her heart, operated in a way to increase sir Francis's fears for her propriety on these occasions; but happily her understanding was as good as her heart was innocent: she comprehended her husband's wishes, and her own duties as connected with him, and without once departing from integrity of speech and openness of con-

duct, she yet maintained the dignified modesty becoming her character and her situation, and by the strict propriety of her manners, earned herself esteem from the fastidious, silenced the chattering, and taught those who affected to lead her, that she could lend lustre, not borrow it. The baronet became proud of his wife, as well as fond of her, and longed to exhibit her to a higher circle; but she was particularly desirous of remaining in the country the first winter after her marriage, and he complied with her wishes.

Although sir Francis was generous, affectionate, and even considerate, yet his habits had been so long formed, that he might be termed a little particular; and Louisa was aware that Henry, who was naturally a fine, romping boy, now in his fourth year, was frequently too noisy to be agreeable to him; she therefore had determined rather to place him under the care of the rector, who would allow him to partake the education of his own children, than to banish him into the nursery,

which would have been heart-breaking to the warm little bosom of a child accustomed only to the tenderest indulgence. To enjoy this winter with her beloved boy without restraint, was not less her object in remaining in the country, than to avoid those recollections which might overpower her spirits, and render her apparently ungrateful *for*, or insensible *to*, the many blessings which surrounded her. But the pleasure she thus insured was of so melancholy a nature, so often did she find herself tracing the father's features or gestures in her unconscious boy, and using the leisure fortune had bestowed for mourning over the bliss she had denied, that she felt glad when sir Francis's return forced her into the path of duty, and laid that restraint upon her which she felt to be requisite.

The husband was pleased with the sacrifice she made him of her son's society, and rendered it as little painful as possible, by an almost daily intercourse with him. Indeed the child was so engaging, that he loved him fondly, and was beloved in return with

such impassioned affection, that he would often say—"Louisa, give me only such another boy as this, and your boon will be perfect!" But unluckily, as he thought, this blessing was denied; his lady presented him with a girl, lovely as a cherub; but though very welcome, he looked forward to a son for his heir.

A second winter passed, and Louisa, absorbed in the delightful duties of a mother, sought not the gaieties of the metropolis; but the third, sir Francis hired an elegant house, and insisted on her partaking his journey, to which she no longer objected.

Sir Francis had one sister, who, early in life, had married a nobleman older than her father, who died at Lisbon, whither he went on account of his health, the year of sir Francis's marriage. She had now made a second choice, and, contrary to her brother's wishes, married a colonel Bellair, a man of family, but small fortune, and reputed of a dissipated turn. This affair had been painful to the baronet, but the

nature of his connexion had given him little power in the way of advice, and the lady was perfectly independent, possessed a superior understanding, and although several years younger than him, was certainly at an age to judge for herself. Whatever might be her error or her wisdom in this proceeding, she was infinitely dear to her brother, amiable and delightful in herself, and so situated in society, as to introduce his lady most auspiciously, and for this reason he was particularly anxious for their speedy meeting, as well as desirous of renewing a long-suspended intercourse with a relative so justly dear to him.

Lady Selthorpe Bellair received Louisa with an air of prepossession in her favour, which evidently strengthened on acquaintance, and soon became a warm and truly sisterly affection, and appeared almost to displace that which she felt for her brother, since though ever happy to see him, yet it was too perceptible to the eye of jealous love, that, gay as she appeared, all was not as it seemed with her even in these

early days. In the bustle of gaiety and perpetual diversion, however, the real enjoyment of one party, and the affected enjoyment of the other, passed unobserved. It was evident that the viscountess wished to be thought happy, and it would have been cruelty to wring from her the truth she sought to conceal. The colonel was polite in his attentions to her family when they met, but was too fashionable to be met frequently in a domestic circle.

Louisa, mixing in a scene altogether new to her, and highly gratified by visiting those public exhibitions where her mind as well as her senses was employed and feasted, had suffered not much sorrow, and hitherto escaped mortification, when one evening she accompanied the viscountess to a rout given on her account, and where an immense crowd was already assembled, and a musical party waiting their arrival, as the signal for beginning their part of the entertainment.

Lady Selthorpe, ever at home, ever wel-

come, bustled through the crowd, which alternately made way for her or pressed around her; but her companion, more timid and less known, found herself intercepted and annoyed by the heat, and therefore took a chair near to the door, being fearful that a farther advance might occasion a faintness, to which she was at this time liable. She was scarcely seated, when the voice of a lady before her attracted her attention, by pronouncing her name, and addressing another with—"Did you ever see dis lady Mowbray dat's coming?"

"I saw her last night at the opera."

"And is she handsome?"

"Very handsome."

"Was she well dressed?"

"Elegantly, in my opinion."

"What sort of a person is she?"

"I cannot describe her further."

"Has she black eyes?"

"I don't know."

"Has she blue ones?"

"I cannot tell."

" Deer, how odd ! Was her dress white?"

" Yes, white crape."

" Are you sure it was crape ?"

" Excuse me, Mrs. Johnson ; I must pass."

The name, for a moment, relieved lady Mowbray ; but it was only for a moment ; the querist, deprived of her last subject, looked round for another, and exhibited to the shrinking eye of lady Mowbray the form of Miss Larolle, enlarged by time and ease, and tricked out by gaudy but trumpery apparel, which accorded with the pearl-powder and rouge that plastered her face.

The natural blush that rose on lady Mowbray's cheek caught her inquisitive glance ; and, gazing on her, she approached her, saying—" Deer me, ma'am, I tink I remember you vey well, though, to be sure, you are vey much altered."

" Probably."

" Well, to be sure, I heard from the woman where you lodged, that some gentleman had taken you away, and I thought

it very likely; but I had no idea of ever seeing you in such a place as dis. But," lowering her voice, "I suppose he has married you?"

Lady Mowbray was unprepared for this species of attack; and having neither her husband nor sister near, she felt perplexed and distressed; she replied—"I am married."

"Dat's well—I'm glad of it; I'm sure you look quite well, and smart too; but I suppose your necklace is paste?"

Lady Mowbray was silent.

"Is it really diamonds?"

"I believe so."

"Deer me, how odd, dat ever you should come to wear a diamond necklace! but some people have luck. I myself tought it vey lucky when I married counsellor Johnson: but between ourselves, he is not such a geat match neder; not but he's monstrous clever—he understands every ting bout de law; he cannot talk, to be sure; some peepel cannot explain demselves, you know; but wid de exception of dem two tings, dere is not a man in de

kingdom more likely to rise in his profession; to be sure, he is rader old."

This communication was made in a tone of whispering confidence, intended to encourage the person whom it addressed, by showing condescension and comparing situations; as, however, it produced no remark, she renewed the first mode of attack.

"You live in de country, don't you?"

"Yes."

"I tought so; what is your husband?"

At this moment sir Francis entered the room, and hastening to his lady, took her hand to conduct her nearer to the performers, saying as he went—"For Heaven's sake, Louisa, who introduced you to that tawdry piece of Paris plaister?"

"I'll answer for it," cried lady Selthorpe, who heard the question, "you mean Mrs. Johnson; for I perceived her setting my sister. She is a perfect leech, and when once she has fastened, is as bad to shake off, as she is disagreeable in sticking fast; but she is mother-in-law to the girl who has just been singing, and enters every party

as her chaperone, so she must be submitted to."

"Not necessarily," said sir Francis, somewhat sternly; "it is very possible to repel impertinence; I wish lady Mowbray would remember what is due to herself."

At such a moment explanation was impossible; but the kind-hearted viscountess saw, in the varying colour of her sister-in-law, that she had some kind of acquaintance with the person in question, which she was of course unwilling to own, but incapable of denying; she therefore shortened her stay as much as she was able, and endeavoured to avoid Mrs. Johnson by every possible means that could be made to appear accidental, partaking both the family feelings of sir Francis and the wifeish fears of his lady, to whom even the slightest expression of his displeasure was ever very painful.

The evening, under her prudent care, had passed off very well, and they were entering a room where refreshments were spread, when Mrs. Johnson spied them, and

darting forwards, exclaimed—"Oh, I am so glad I have found you agáin you can't tink! I have just been talking to Mrs. Carpenter, who was Miss Groves, about you, and I couldn't make her ecollect you."

Louisa, in great confusion, said, "very likely," while sir Francis gazed at the speaker and his lady with equal vexation and surprise; the former, anxious to learn who he was, and thinking to force herself upon one who could afford to wear diamonds, continued—"But at last she cy'd out all at once, 'Oh,' says she, 'I remember de poor young cretur very well; I gave her de first half-guinea I won at cassino.' How vey odd, wasn't it? Don't you tink it was odd yourself?"

The baronet, instead of entering the room, called aloud for his carriage, and in his tone of voice, Louisa read the vexation he experienced. She felt assured that a little exertion on her part might have repelled the impertinence of this woman on

her first intrusion ; but the uneasiness and anger of her husband deprived her of all self-possession, and she felt as eager to return as he could possibly be.

As he drew her arm within his, he felt it tremble, and though sorry for her, even her emotion added to his vexation. Lady Selthorpe urged him to remain ; but as he positively refused, she wisely determined to do it herself, as the only means of discomfiting the wishes of those whom curiosity might lead to make further inquiries even of a woman they would otherwise shun.

Such was the confusion and trepidation of sir Francis, that in his haste to escape, although he perceived his lady was ill, he yet urged her to walk to her carriage, finding that it was impossible for it to draw out of the line. She made no objection, as the air might revive her, but was troubled at finding a good deal of the company left the house when they did, and, like them, walked to their carriages. But how was her confusion increased, when, on standing

aside for a chair to pass, she found herself addressed from the female within it, who, on having a clear view of her from her own flambeaux, cried out, in a voice too well remembered—"Stop! stop, I say! let me speak to that lady!"

The chairmen obeyed, and the voice continued—"Louiser! Louiser! what, won't you speak to your aunt? Marry come up, I think if I speaks first to my husben's run-away relations, they may be thankful, let their luck be what it may."

Lady Mowbray, in a faint voice, hoped Mrs. Deverell was well?

"Why yes, I be pretty well, but your uncle keeps peaking and pining still. I hopes you got the five-pound note as I sent you, when you was starving with the poor liftenant?"

Lady Mowbray could not answer, and what was worse, she could not pass forward; the chair obstructed the path, and the company were now unwillingly detained as well as herself; every moment increased the confusion and distress of Louisa, and much

as she struggled for composure, she yet sunk on the baronet's shoulder almost fainting, while Mrs. Deverell, noticing her distress, increased it by adding—" Well, well, you had one excuse, for sure I don't remember as ever I see a handsomer man; an if the barrownite there thinks no worse of you, other folks may hold their tongues."

Loud tittering and whispering was now heard, and whether it was excited by his lady or Mrs. Deverell, the baronet had as little inclination as power to canvass; stung with mortification, he dragged his sinking partner to her carriage, and in a voice of thunder, told his servants to drive on. He had never been so moved before; and although Louisa could not lay even the shadow of guilt to her own door, yet she felt like a guilty creature trembling in the presence of her judge.

She was lifted from her carriage, and the sight of her pale countenance instantly recalled the baronet to a sense of what was due to her situation; but alas! the perturbations of the evening had been too much

for her, and the premature birth of a dead son presented the baronet with a more serious source of regret and mortification.

Lady Selthorpe sincerely partook his grief and disappointment; but as soon as she perceived his spirits were equal to enduring the reproof of raillery, she ridiculed a fastidiousness and sensitiveness, which placed not only his happiness, but his welfare, in the hands of even those whom he despised. "Surely," said she, "you counted the cost when you married this lovely and excellent being, for you were neither young nor foolish, and time ought to enable you to pay the price willingly, since it has certainly taught you to value the purchase. After all, what was the mighty mischief? A silly woman, in a silly manner, reminds your lady of her poverty, of which you were well aware; a vulgar woman claims her relationship, of which you were likewise aware; had you met the charges manfully, instead of being the butt of scorn, you would have become the subject of admiration. How-

ever, take comfort; you have a sister, who, without your pretensions to courage or philosophy, did it for you."

"What do you mean, Fiducea?"

"The very moment you were gone, keeping in the very line in which you left me, I made up to our kind hostess, and desired she would introduce me to Mrs. Carpenter. She did so; I found her an agreeable-looking person, who had, I doubted not, by mere chance, in the way of exclamation, named the half-guinea. I told her I could not omit an opportunity of thanking her for having done a service to a gentlewoman suffering under temporary distress, who was now my beloved sister, and would, with myself, be happy to cultivate her acquaintance.

"She blushed excessively on the first mention of the affair; but recovering, said she remembered being struck with the elegance of the lady she supposed I alluded to, whom she was glad to find restored to her proper rank in society. Many eyes glanced towards Mrs. Johnson, and her

hearers pressed towards us. Assuming a sportive tone, I said—'We all know misery, as Sancho says, makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows; and it was doubtless no common evil which laid my sister at the mercy of one who is an adept in the art of tormenting. If lady Mowbray could not escape in her present situation, we may all imagine what she suffered in the days of distress and poverty.'

"Mrs. Johnson was nearly deserted, when there came an accession of power from the street, and I rallied again to catch the mimicked accents of Mrs. Deverell, and learnt with pain that Louisa had fainted on Mrs. Deverell's intimation that she ran away with the lieutenant. Just as I had caught the particulars, I began to relate them to a gentleman at the bottom of the table, adding, the sight of a woman who had used her so ill was really enough to kill poor lady Mowbray at this time, and observing to the countess of Portinscale that I should go home immediately, to see if my *sister* was better; on which she took the hint,

and rising with even more than her accustomed majesty, said—' Lady Mowbray's health was of the last importance both to her own family and that of sir Francis; she would accompany me."

"I grant you managed admirably, my lady; but every person can act better for their friends than themselves, on occasions of this kind."

"But surely it is unmanly for a man to desert either himself or his wife at such a moment. My father used to tell us never to be ashamed of any thing but sin, you know; and our aunt Mercy repeated the doctrine by every possible example, from a fib to a forgery."

"Aye, aye, Fiducea, laugh on; ' those jest at scars who never felt a wound.'"

For a moment lady Selthorpe's eyes seemed robbed of their lustre; she looked as if she was no stranger to wounds, though she exhibited no scars; but fearful that her feelings should be inquired into, she [illegible] hastily to the nursery, and bringing thence the little Louisa, began to play with her; and

in their noisy mirth, the conversation ended, and a happier train of thought occupied the mind of the baronet, though he still regretted his boy, and experienced an awakening of irritability in his temper, a suspicion of covert insult, which tormented him not the less because (convinced that his sister was right) he endeavoured to conceal it.

The recovery of his lady was so slow, that he experienced great uneasiness on her account; but in time this very misfortune had a salutary effect on his mind, by teaching him to see of how much more value she was to him than any people, or any opinions, much less those that bask and flutter in the mere sunshine of prosperity and fashion.

Sir Francis was led by the above circumstance to pay more attention to the situation of his lady with respect to her family than he had ever yet done, and although the manners of Mrs. Deverell had excessively disgusted him, he yet thought it a species of duty to establish her connexion in the eye of the world, by calling on Mr. Deverell, whose heiress she appeared to be,

since the colonel's fate, though unknown, left little hopes of seeing him, and the baronet knew enough of human nature to believe that a splendid alliance was more likely to help her to her rights than her necessities would have been. As an individual, he wished as little as he wanted the wealth of James Deverell; but he knew that in the splendid title of an heiress, her day of poverty would be forgotten, and he loved her child so dearly, both for his own and his mother's sake, as to wish to see him the possessor of his grandfather's rights.

The baronet found Mr. Deverell a withered old man, vainly seeking from the aid of medicine restoration to the springs of life, which were sapped in their prime by unnatural care, grievous disappointment n the loss of his last child, and perpetual family vexations. A faint blush of shame tinged his cheek as Louisa's name passed his lips, which the baronet repeatedly called into action, by adverting to her virtues, her sufferings, and especially her love for his son, a love which in its consequences

led to the connexion, which, notwithstanding the worth of the object, was so singularly fatal to her happiness.

"Yes, she was a good girl; she loved my little James very dearly."

Sir Francis could have said—"How did you reward that love?" but his errand was that of peace and expediency; to recriminate and reproach could not now serve Louisa, and might ruin her child; he therefore constrained himself, which he was the better enabled to do, as the helpless being before him claimed not less his pity than merited his contempt, and he therefore added only—"I have a boy at home, Mr. Deverell, that might make up to you the little one you lament; visit me in the country, and see him before you return home."

This invitation it was not in the invalid's power at present to accept, even if the higher powers in his family had permitted it; but at this very time Mr. Chester's affairs were in confusion, and his mother was straining every nerve to secure him the

Deverell estate; but so frequent were the discussions and the jars between her and her daughter on the subject, that they could not avoid reaching the ears of Mr. Deverell himself, and of course disgusting him exceedingly; but anxious for peace, he disguised his intentions, and made many silent inquiries respecting his brother, of whom, at this very time, he had gained some little intelligence, but not sufficiently confirmed to be relied upon.

The baronet escaped from this visit with the sense of a man who has submitted to a painful and degrading duty, if any duty ought to be deemed degrading; but on his return, he spoke of his reception in such a manner as to spare his lady from all painful retrospection, and awaken some hopes for the future.

As soon as lady Mowbray could travel, they returned to that "pleasant home" she inwardly desired never more to quit, and she was received with such abundant welcome, such fullness of respect and good-will by all her neighbours as well as depen-

dents, as to obliterate the mortifications of the metropolis, and render the country still more dear to her. But of all her friends none were more dear to her than poor William and his wife, and they, with her lovely boy, were the first to greet her.

This honest couple, though industrious and frugal, had unfortunately been too generous to thrive in their little trade, the very nature of the articles they dealt in forming a perpetual temptation to the ruling passion. 'Twas but a few cherries to a child, or a cucumber to a sick lodger, or a cabbage that they gave away; but, alas! in these trifles their profits were consumed, and they struggled with poverty without conceiving where the error lay. The kind interest lady Mowbray took in all their affairs led her to detect the evil and provide the remedy; and William was now placed in a situation, on sir Francis's estate, in which he enjoyed every comfort, without the means of injuring himself, yet enjoying the pleasure of being beneficial to others.

During the absence of the family, Henry was grown, and every way improved; the sight of him sent a pang to the heart of the baronet; but he lived in hopes—but those hopes were vain; lady Mowbray had no farther offspring.

CHAP. X.

Three years had passed on with little change in the baronet's family, except the improvement of the children, during which time lady Mowbray "had never changed, nor wished to change her place," save by an occasional trip to the sea, when Henry, who still partook the rector's cares, and who had assisted him to close his good old father's eyes, rushed into the room with a country newspaper in his hand, saying to sir Francis—"Pray, sir, read this paper, for William says there is something in it that will make me as rich as a Jew."

"Some patent kite, I suppose; or a new game at nine-pins," said the baronet.

"Oh no, sir; 'tis a real thing, or my master, you know, wou'dn't have sent me from the Rectory on purpose. I ran all the way, or else I would have looked at it.

'Tis—let me see—down that side, he said; not among the poetry, sir."

"I believe not, Hal; the Muses hold little society with Plutus. Um—um—ah! here we have it!"

"Oh, sir! don't you think Plutus's cave the most wonderful place——"

"Hush! 'Deaths last Thursday.—James Deverell, esq. of Cleveland Hall, in ——. He is succeeded in his estates and large accumulations by his grand-nephew, Henry Deverell Mackenzie, an infant, provided his brother, the gallant colonel Deverell, does not appear and claim them within his minority."

"Oh, but I hope he will," cried the boy; "for of all things I should like to have a gallant colonel for an uncle; I want to be a colonel myself—if—if you please, sir."

"Time enough to think of that, Hal; but kiss your mother on this happy occasion."

Henry flew into his mother's arms, then, hastening back, seized the collar of sir

Francis, who embraced him with glistening eyes; from thence he was bending his steps to the nursery, when, as if recovering a sense of propriety, he stopped short —"I thought when people died, it wasn't right to call it 'happy occasion;' is it, mother?"

"Depend upon it, 'twas right in *this* instance," said lady Mowbray, "for you know sir Francis said so."

"It was, however, a hasty expression, as used to a child; remember, Henry, what I *now* tell you. The relation you have lost was not happy in himself, nor did he do good to others; therefore his wealth being bequeathed, as we will hope, to better hands, made me term this a happy affair; should it become yours, and you pursue his steps, it will be an *unhappy* occasion; this is the term used when people die. I am sure you would have used it had I died, though I left you every thing, park, horses, gardens, and all."

"You, *you*! Oh, I hope you will ne-

ver, *never* die!" cried the affectionate boy, bursting into tears as he spoke. "No, no, I hope you will live; and if I *am* to be rich, will you be so good as to take a legacy from me? Oh pray, sir, do have a legacy."

Sir Francis, smiling, twinkled away a tear, and explained to him what a legacy meant; at the same time informing him that there were reasons for believing his uncle might return, in which case the money in question never would be his.

"Then after all," said Henry, with a sigh, "I shall not be a soldier."

"Yes, Henry; when your education is finished, and your mother consents, *I* will make you a soldier."

"My mother will consent, I know, sir, because, you know, my father was a soldier, and my grandfather; and besides, my cousin used to say that all the Mackenzies were born for soldiers."

"Well, well, we will see what a hero you will be; go to Louisa, for this subject requires immediate attention; I believe,

indeed, it calls for a journey; what do you think, my dear?"

After a short consultation, sir Francis set out for Cleveland Hall, accompanied by Henry. Happy was it for his lady that she was spared the pain of this visit, for the house, at this period, might be termed the den of the furies; the most ungovernable rage possessed the mistress, which she vented in the most vulgar abuse of her late husband, who, in thus bestowing his estate, although evidently an act of mere justice, and an evidence of repentance, might have been guilty of the most flagrant crime. Mr. Richard Chester, who had visited the house for the purpose of taking shelter from his creditors, alike disappointed, and alarmed for the consequences, united in the outcry; while his sister alternately exulted in the event which blasted hopes in which she had not been considered, and railed at the miser who had immured her best days, and blasted her schemes.

Previous to the arrival of the baronet

various schemes for producing a later will, or invalidating the legality of the present, had been agitated; but the late testator had been too good a lawyer, and too cautious a man, not to have taken every possible precaution; and the attorney who had taken possession of the premises presented sir Francis with a correct copy, whereby he found himself nominated as trustee to the will, along with a neighbouring gentleman; but the deed differed from the newspaper statement, inasmuch as thirty thousand pounds was expressly left to lady Mowbray, and her child was dependant on her until his coming of age; and ten thousand pounds was given to his widow, to be, after her death, divided between her son and daughter--an act of generosity wholly unmerited, but which could not save his memory from ungrateful abuse; indeed the man whose meanness or selfishness forbade him to be loved through life, will rarely be respected after death for any act of kindness.

Sir Francis behaved with the politeness

and urbanity natural to his character, in the arrangements he deemed it necessary to make, and Mrs. Deverell confessed that he behaved " like a bettermore sort of a person enough;" but Miss Chester, who saw in him a person she should like as well at the present day as she had loved Mackenzie in her youthful hours, was so oppressed with spleen, as to render herself absolutely hateful in the baronet's eyes; he therefore left the house, fully exonerating his lady from all charge of youthful imprudence in quitting such a family, to become the wife of any respectable man, and felt a degree of additional esteem for one who had sustained the trial so well.

When the particulars of the will were related to lady Mowbray, she felt sincere pleasure, both in the circumstance of her own immediate accession of fortune, (for what woman does not love to give her husband a dower?) and likewise in the restraint put upon her son, since she was aware that independence was but too often the ruin of youth, especially when they

were of the high-spirited and liberal disposition inherent in Henry. The poor boy himself had been so flouted and snubbed by the women they had left, that he now looked upon the affair as much worse than nothing in his own case; and from conceiving himself as rich as Crœsus, and pouring gold into the lap of all he loved, he sunk at once into the belief that he was become much poorer than he used to be—an opinion his mother did not contradict, aware that it would not trouble Hal long, and that when it recurred, it might have a beneficial effect; his first steps were to little Louisa, whom he presented with a few dirty raisins, saying—"Here, Louiy, this is all I have brought from the old miser's."

"You mustn't call your uncle a miser."

"Why, mother, his own wife did, and I suppose she knew best; and so did Miss Até, her sweet daughter."

"But why will you imitate people you cannot help disapproving, Henry? These ladies were not good ladies for saying so."

"La, mother, they were not ladies at

all, but women in black gowns; but, however, it is very true, one ought not to imitate them, for they were so cross to me, you can't think, every moment sir Francis went out; and even the servants were cross too, except one old woman, who gave me raisins. I know what I thought; thinks I, sir Francis protects me from all the world *now*, and when I'm a soldier, and he is an old man, I'll protect *him*, and he shall lean on my shoulder, and I'll read the Bible to him, if he be ever so deaf; and if any body dare to touch his white locks, I'll knock 'em down, mother, in a minute."

About six months after this period, one winter's night, a postchaise and four arrived at Sefton Park, and a stranger, infirm in his limbs, but prepossessing in his countenance, alighted from it. He did not announce himself; and the agitation which every moment grew more apparent in his countenance, seemed to forbid inquiry; he leaned on a young gentleman, who inquired for lady Mowbray, and they were ushered into a parlour, where sh

was employed at backgammon with her husband, on whose knee their lovely child sat shaking the dice-box.

On perceiving the strangers, they rose, and the gentlemen approaching, they perceived the elder wore regimentals under the *roquelaire* which wrapped him; his form, though bent, was commanding; a few thin white locks skirted his open forehead, which was fair, but the rest of his face had been bronzed by a meridian sun; he was an entire stranger, but a smile made him welcome; he essayed to speak, but appeared for a moment unable.

Sir Francis felt convinced that he was a gentleman in distress; he offered him a chair, with an air of more than common courtesy; it was accepted, and silence broke.

"I am so great a stranger, that——"

"Oh, my father!—my uncle! Yes, yes, oh yes, it must be him!"

Lady Mowbray rushed into the stranger's arms; he received her as a beloved child; quick tears coursed down his veteran face; again and again he clasped her to his

breast, blessed her, and thanked his God that he beheld her.

Sir Francis, ever alive to the finest emotions of the human heart, sympathized in their joy, and welcomed the long-lost warrior with the greetings of a son and a brother; but as he looked upon him, and remembered how often Louisa had described him as the handsomest and youngest of the Deverells, he wondered not that she recollected him not, so heavily had the climate and his own sufferings visited his person, and assisted the ravages of time.

When general Deverell could spare his own Louisa from his arms, he invited her little daughter to them: she was a shy and timid child, and the appearance of the stranger, or rather his monstrous wrapping-coat, had excited some alarm; but this was dissipated by his voice, and she went to him with an air of silent confidence.

"We shall be better acquainted by-and-by," said the general, as he wiped another tear from the corner of his eye.

"I know you *now*," said the little Hebe, as she laid her glowing cheek to the furrowed face of the smiling soldier.

"Indeed! Who am I, my pretty one?"

"You are Henry's uncle, that has been in the wars. Oh, you don't know how pleased he will be to see you!"

"Bless the boy! I hope he will love his uncle. His father was a noble youth; but why do *you* sigh, my pretty one? it is too soon."

"Don't take Henry to the wars; pray don't."

Long and sorrowful, though deeply interesting to the uncle and niece, was the conversation that now took place; and it was a late hour ere the invalid sought his repose; but in the morning all was forgot; the grandson of his beloved brother, the promised restorer of a noble race, was before him, and the sorrows of many years were consigned to oblivion. The features of the father blended with those of the Deverells in his face; and on the baronet retiring with the general's aid-de-camp, he

could not forbear inquiring further respecting a marriage of which he had been merely told, at his paternal seat, in the most cursory way, as clandestine and unhappy, the conversation of the preceding evening having related of course to the parents of Louisa, who were ever the first in his remembrance, and to his own long captivity and restoration.

Lady Mowbray lived and suffered again through the story of her early love and early widowhood. She dwelt on the character, and described the affection her bosom's lord had displayed towards her, with all the enthusiasm of youth and the ardour of attachment; and the good old man perceived, that as in times of sorrow, "many waters cannot quench love," so in peculiar characters neither will the glow of prosperity consume it; and with the tears he gave to her past sufferings was mingled a faint sigh for what he deemed her present privations; but Louisa, warm and grateful, passed on to speak of her present blessings, the uniform kindness of her husband, his

delicacy, generosity, and general warmth, more especially his kindness to her son, whom she was assured he would ever provide for, as a near branch of his family, and on whose infant mind he had endeavoured to engraft every virtue.

She spoke of his virtues with the eloquence they were calculated to inspire, describing him as an affectionate husband, a father at once indulgent and wise, an incorruptible senator, a generous landlord, a kind master, and an hospitable friend; declaring her path in life to be so strewn with flowers, that perhaps it were well that she was forced, by past affliction, to "remember some things were, and were most dear to her," to prevent her from forgetting that this world was not her rest; and that her joys, as well as her sorrows, were probationary.

They next adverted to the will of James Deverell; and in hearing the sums mentioned already as legacies, the general could not forbear loudly expressing his indignation on the cold-hearted passion

which could freeze the current of nature in man's bosom, and bid him lock that wealth from his brother, and deny even the pittance of charity to that brother's child, a small portion of which might have re-animated, in either case, the springs of life, softened the horrors of parting from the helpless beings left behind, and shed a ray of comfort on the couch of death; in terms of strong reproach, he reprobated the madness of amassing mighty sums, even for a proper object; he called it gathering small streams into a lake, whose useless waters become either stagnant, and corrupt the land, or profuse, and overflow it; whereas their natural course would spread fertility, riches, and beauty, over every part.

"When I reflect on my uncle's sufferings," replied lady Mowbray, "I forget his faults; no error can more immediately punish itself than covetousness; it produces guilt without pleasure, since it leads to the commission of injustice, which loads the conscience, at the same time that it

denies those pleasures which might blunt its reproaches, or those charities which might palliate the offence. A covetous man neither loves nor is beloved; he dwells a noxious and isolated plant in the garden of society, and the good he exhales from others falls as a mildew on himself. When I first saw my uncle, he struck me as being much older than my father, whose many cares and sorrows had been so softened by the intercourse of love and the feelings of benevolence, that his features partook their influence; nor has a tropical sun, a cruel enemy, and a wounded heart, withered you as this son of fortune was withered by the power he worshipped."

"Poor James! thou wert indeed 'a covetous man,' of whom it is said that 'God abhorreth;' but I trust, that ere thy departure, his mercy touched thy heart, and inspired thee to make restitution."

"Do not doubt it, my dear sir; for notwithstanding his misconduct, be assured he had a heart capable of melting, though

unequal to reforming; hence arose his misery in life, but I trust his happiness in death; but on this subject 'we must draw the curtain close,' and 'forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.'"

"True, Louisa; but now we are on the subject, I must inform you, that the rank his majesty has been pleased to deem my services deserved, is equal to my wants; and that a small sum of money (it was then my all), which I placed, above a dozen years ago, for your portion, in the Calcutta bank, has, together with my pay, made a handsome sum; so that I want nothing, and am perfectly willing to let the Deverell estate go immediately to your son; God grant he may make a worthy use of it!"

"While I sincerely thank you, yet I earnestly beseech you never to mention it again. Henry is now an amiable, excellent, but somewhat headstrong child; and independence coming too soon, might destroy the blossoms of virtue; there will not be wanting those who would teach him

to slight sir Francis as only a father-in-law in such a case; and I am convinced not only that my happiness, but his own, will be the forfeit of any errors of that kind; for though his impetuous temper may be tempted to disobedience, he will never be able to reflect on ingratitude, without suffering all the agonies of contrition."

"In which case he would be frankly forgiven!"

"But why, my dear sir, should we run the risk of his errors, in the hopes of his repentance?—why take off a silken rein, which may restrain, but cannot injure, and with which a merciful Providence has supplied us, in lieu of that which death deprived us of? Though a woman, I abhor servility as much as you can do; but a natural dependence is less a restraint than a support, and contributes as much to happiness as wisdom. I trust you will, for years, live happy and beloved, in the abode of your ancestors, and bequeath it to one worthy of being your successor; but in order to render him such, let him look

to it as the reward of labour, of virtue, of duty."

"Ah, my dear girl, how justly has it been said, that 'sweet are the uses of adversity,' for they have inspired you with wisdom, that renders prosperity indeed a blessing! I submit to your wishes; and hope, under the guidance of such a mother, our brave boy will never regret his uncle's return. He is too young at present to be aware of any difference from the circumstance; but remember, Louisa, I must have him *love* me; remember that; for the love of your father, I renounced all thoughts of marriage; in his progeny I saw my own, and I must still see it; and if, as a weather-beat old man, unknown, and perhaps unloveable, the young rogue should only regard me for the trash of which my life deprives him, then, then, Louisa, I must give it him, indeed I must."

"What, when he least deserves it! Oh no; but this will never be the case, dear, *dear* uncle! How can you suspect him of such ingratitude—yourself of such deme-

rit? Be assured, dear sir, there never yet existed a child without the feeling of Desdemona, 'who saw Othello's visage in his mind;' and how much more dear to the expanding soul of youth becomes the virtues he comprehends, the character he admires! and my boy already loves *you*."

"I really think he does; yes, I really think he does love me; and the girl too; I will give them twenty guineas to buy toys, Louisa."

"By no means, my dear sir."

"What, give them nothing?—come all the way from India, and give them nothing?"

"Nothing, till you have convinced not only yourself, but me, that they love you dearly."

"Poor lambs, they both kissed me this morning; what proof further would you have of their love?"

"Obedience, cheerful obedience."

"Pray, lady Mowbray, may I inquire how old you are?"

"Old enough, my dear sir, to know the

value of my husband's wisdom; and therefore not only to recommend, but to practise obedience."

"Well, as I perceive myself to be many years your junior, I will endeavour to follow your example, and, to the utmost of my power, pay your precepts *obedience*. But remember I must be beloved."

CHAP. XI.

Under the wing of her uncle, as well as that of her husband, lady Mowbray was induced to spend this winter and the ensuing spring once more in London. But on the arrival of warm weather, the general, accompanied by his dear niece and her respectable consort, took possession of Cleveland Hall, and rejoiced the surrounding country by bringing a Deverell amongst them, whom they could love and esteem. Past sorrows, and the contrast of present blessings, rendered this visit extremely affecting to lady Mowbray, when she considered in how different a situation she moved to that under which she first entered this inhospitable roof, and how completely it might be now said, that her enemies were put under her.

Without giving way to the least vindictive feeling, she could not help rejoicing

in the mercies she experienced, surrounded as she was by friends, and blest by fortune. But when her truant feet wandered through the same groves, traced the same rivulet, or leaned beneath the same tree, where she had first listened to the voice of love, first beheld the drops of manly tenderness and gentle compassion suffuse the eyes of her brave lover, her heart again throbbed, and seemed to ask again for him. The season, the scene, the very breeze, and the scents of the plants, affected her senses as they were wont; nor was she conscious of any change in herself—her eye was as quick to discern beauty, her heart as warm and lively to the voice of love, as then; and surrendering herself to the power of imagination, for a few moments she would be absorbed in the visions it presented, and live her "wooing days again." Then would busy memory rush, like the destroying angel, on her mind, tear down the delightful veil that "wrapt her in Elysium," and present such distressing scenes, such agonizing pictures, that with beating heart

and streaming eyes she would fly from the spot, and bury herself in the darkest corner of the mansion, as if to shut out the remembrance of her sufferings, with the view that awakened it.

During the period of their absence, Henry had been placed at a boarding-school well calculated to combine the advantages of public and private education; and little Louisa, at the earnest solicitation of her aunt, lady Selthorpe, had been suffered to remain with her. This lady had lately lost her only child; and though very young, the loss had deeply affected, and, for the present, rendered her incapable of any enjoyment, save what she received from the society of her niece.

It was believed by many, that other sorrows mingled with those of the mother at this time, for they knew the colonel was extravagant and dissipated; but as she had, until the death of her babe, ever appeared in most excellent spirits, and carefully concealed his errors from their knowledge, sir Francis and his lady were satisfied that

she was happy; nor did Rumour, with her hundred tongues, depute one of them to contradict the belief. It is a certain fact, that many things occur in families, better known to the whole world than the parties most interested in them.

Lady Mowbray, during the period we speak of, had neither suffered mortification, nor been the cause of its infliction; and she had experienced much pleasure in the variety of amusements, the change of society she had experienced, and much solid satisfaction from seeing her valued uncle, the friend and benefactor of her beloved parents, seated in his parental home, and likely to experience as much comfort there as his premature old age and various infirmities admitted. But yet, on returning to her own "pleasant home," resuming her extensive circle of duties, and her own mild and equable government, especially in beholding her beloved children, she was sensible that this was the scene of her purest gratification, her most acute as well as solid felicity. But scarcely

could she call it *hers*, ere a blow descended which threatened its dissolution, and induced a train of feeling to which she had been long a stranger.

It will be naturally concluded, that during the years passed since lady Mowbray's marriage, those generous relatives who had received her in her distress had been frequently her visitors. They were again their guests; and as the good clergyman was never more happy than when engaged in the duties of his profession, and sir Francis was following his dearest occupation when contributing to the good of those around him, it was common for them during their rides to look in upon the tenantry, and inquire their welfare, especially since the unusual absence of the baronet. The sick in the immediate neighbourhood of the Park were all known to its lady, and relieved by her; but those at a greater distance frequently came first under the eye of its munificent master.

One day the gentlemen happened to visit a house, the master of which was said

to be very ill, and, in fact, was dying of a typhus fever. On being informed his landlord had called, he entreated most earnestly to see him; and in consequence, the gentlemen entered his chamber together. The sick man feebly grasped the offered hand of the baronet, and looking earnestly at his friend, desired him to pray with him.

His request was immediately complied with; and during the time of this solemn appeal, the poor man still held the hand of his good landlord, who could not bring himself to withdraw it, since it appeared a comfort to one whose earthly enjoyments were fast drawing to a close.

When they departed, sir Francis appeared happy in the circumstance which had led them to this house of mourning, which he determined to relieve and benefit by every means in his power; but it was remarked that he looked pale, was overpowered by his emotions, and unable to eat any dinner on his return.

The following morning he complained

of sickness, and Mr. Mackenzie becoming alarmed by the recollection that the sickness they had witnessed might be infectious, a medical adviser was sent for. He came too late to prevent the consequences now dreaded. Sir Francis was soon in a state of fever the most alarming; the visitants and children were sent out of the house—the younger part of the servants forbidden to enter the apartments—regular nurses provided—and every precaution taken to prevent the spreading of a disease which was declared to appear in a form of uncommon virulence.

Lady Mowbray heard these orders reiterated, especially to herself. "Your agitation, madam, will render you peculiarly liable to the complaint—it will be better for you to retire. Sir Francis is delirious, of course your presence can afford him no comfort; and in his lucid moments he will be happy in the sense of your safety."

Lady Mowbray was silent.

"You can hear of him every hour;

your children, my lady, claim your attention—for their sakes guard yourself."

She rushed from the presence of her friends, and sought her dressing-room; there, in all the anguish of contending emotion, with nearly speechless but heartfelt supplication, she besought her heavenly Father to enlighten and guide her in this moment of difficulty and distress. Bitter and agonizing were the emotions of her heart, when she prayed for him whom she now felt dear to her beyond all former feelings of affection—him whom she revered as a father, loved as a friend, and gloried in as a husband—him whose virtues and whose protection had cast a halo around her, whose sacred light would in his grave be extinguished for ever.

She arose—she re-entered the room she had quitted with a firmer step, and fearful of herself, gave her daughter only one fond hasty kiss; then turning to her friend, who waited her determination, she said—"To your care I commit her, thankful that

in the hour of need God hath raised me such a friend. If the chamber of sickness to which I now devote myself prove that of death, tell my children I was a kind mother to them—I did not lightly leave them—but, oh! tell them, dear sir, tell them what I owed my husband, and then they will bless the sacrifice."

"But mother, mother, I will stay with you," cried the little cherub, hanging round her.

A burst of grief for a moment rent the heart of the mother; but she broke from her child—she did not even trust herself with another kiss; uttering some half-suffocated message of tenderness to her Henry, she fled instantly to her husband's chamber, as to the sanctuary where her first duties should be paid, her warmest affections be concentrated; there, devoting herself solely to attending on him, and taking only such care for herself as enabled her the better to perform the arduous task she had chosen, she remained the witness of sufferings she could not alleviate, the sharer

of danger it was impossible to avoid; but yet supported by the consciousness that not one duty was omitted, and that she was giving freely to him who had freely given to her.

During the terrible days and wearisome nights which now measured a dreadful season of suspense and sorrow, the unhappy invalid continued a stranger to all around him; and many times his faithful wife was heart-rent with the bitter complaints he made of her absence, or shocked with the abuse with which he loaded her, as a wicked demon that came thither to torment him.

At length the violence of his delirium abated, he fell into a profound melancholy, and the powers of nature appeared sinking into complete exhaustion. He now gazed on his pale attendant with a softened expression, and without appearing to recognise, yet seemed to approve, and instinctively obey. Thankful for this disposition, she used her power over him, and prevailed upon him to take whatever was necessary, even when it appeared most

loathsome to him. This was the crisis of his fate. The fever was gone, but nature sunk beneath the ravages it inflicted, and life hung upon a thread so finely fragile, the very breath of affection seemed capable of destroying it; and for nearly thirty hours Louisa felt fearful lest the reason she so fondly watched should suddenly return, and in the moment of beholding her and blessing her, he should expire.

Happily a long and refreshing slumber was the prelude to this affecting restoration, and the baronet returned to the light of reason, and the hopes of life. She who, from such unmixed tenderness, such conscientious purity of duty, had watched his pillow, endured his reproaches, and patiently partook his watchings, did not ask his approbation, or seek his pity to console her now. At this eventful moment she first withdrew from his presence, and suffered those who were less interesting to him to receive him on his return, and thereby save him from the contemplation of the person or actions of one so dear to

him, at a time when his weakened frame could ill sustain a spectacle so sweet, yet so affecting; how was she repaid for this self-denial, by finding that his first inquiries were for her, and that he expressed himself satisfied that she was anxiously waiting to see him, and kept only from his presence by the physician!

When lady Mowbray approached the bedside as a stranger; the fond eyes of the husband for a moment gazed upon her as such, and with true tenderness he warned her against approaching him too nearly. When she answered, her voice seemed to affect him, and his recollection seemed confused. She spoke again, and a sudden conviction flashed upon his mind; and raising his head from his pillow, he gazed upon her with such deep and anxious interest, as to alarm her; she entreated him to be composed, saying, "If you do so, my dear, I must leave you."

"No, you will not leave me, Louisa, you have never left me, I see—I see it all.

Dear, wonderful woman! none but a wife would have done this!"

Tears coursed freely down his cheek, and the flush of awakened tenderness glowed on all his features. Trembling for the consequences she had vainly endeavoured to obviate, Louisa, kneeling by him, besought him to be calm, to remember her more than life hung on the moment; and again he obeyed as he were wont, and checking his emotion, lay tranquil, and by degrees regained his salutary slumbers.

The health of the baronet was gradually restored; but he did not experience the quick return to appetite, and consequent strength, frequently experienced in fever cases. His convalescence was tedious, but borne without repining, save as it prolonged the confinement, and injured the health of her, who, from this time, appeared to have acquired a new and lively interest in his heart, and whom he could not prevail upon to quit her charge for any advantage to herself.

Lady Mowbray finding herself escape from infection, became only the more anxious to save others from danger, and made the very circumstance of her safety a plea to keep others from sharing the risk. Her dear invalid was now inexpressibly precious to her; and feeling his health, in a great measure, her own work, she was jealous lest any one should participate her honours; and though, in the humility of her heart, she truly said, "Not unto me, oh Lord, but unto thy name be the praise," yet it was only to her God her affection would yield the prize for which she had so happily contended.

At length the baronet quitted his chamber, and even under the rays of a mild autumnal sun, ventured a short way into the park, leaning on the arm of her whose pale cheek and shrunken form seemed to call rather for the support she gave.

The affectionate servants, who had been so long, for their own sakes, denied the sight of their respected and now almost-idolized

master, on learning the circumstance, could not refrain from hastening to look at him, and praising God aloud for his restoration. Fearful this scene would affect him too much, lady Mowbray turned towards them, and while she thanked them for their love, and commended their piety, yet entreated them to desist from a demonstration of affection inconsistent with their beloved master's welfare.

Whilst they were reluctantly retiring, she led sir Francis towards a seat placed against the paling; but she was again alarmed by hearing somebody speaking as if in anger, behind the fence, and still more startled by hearing Henry's voice in answer, exclaim in fury—" I don't care, I tell you! I don't care for fevers, nor masters, nor nobody else! what did I run away for? answer me *that*; what did I run away for? not see him indeed!"

In an instant the agile boy shot over the paling, and was at the feet of sir Francis. Again he embraced his knees—his feet; he kissed them, he wept upon them, and

in agitated extacy, sobbing, cried—" Yes, yes, you *are* alive, my father, my father!"

Overpowered with his emotion, the baronet one moment stooped to embrace him, the next recoiled, exclaiming—" Louisa, save the boy! oh, my poor fellow, my dear Henry! why do you come?"

Making a violent effort, the trembling mother bade the boy instantly leave them; but his extreme emotion would not permit him to rise; and the baronet, in despite of his weakness, was the first to fly, while Henry, sobbing, entreated forgiveness, and declared that he would much rather die than be so miserable as he had been.

At length peace succeeded the agitations of the hour, and the affectionate boy heard with rapture he was not only forgiven, but applauded by his mother; and the baronet told him, with a tearful smile, that although he had certainly done wrong, yet he trusted to his future good conduct, and would ever remember the decisive proof of affection he had given. " But now, my good boy," added he, " give me a *more* decisive one,

by leaving us; I do not ask you to do it, Henry, for your own sake—had you thought of yourself, you had never come, but do it for mine, my son."

"I will go this moment, sir—but—"

"I understand you, my love, but you must not kiss even your mother."

"Nor Louisa, sir?"

"Louisa, like yourself, is banished, my child; return to your master. Harrison shall take you, and save you from all blame."

With one fond look Henry left the park; and whilst he took a slight refreshment in the house, Harrison received his orders. Whilst he gave them, he took a new guinea from his purse, which he held for a moment in his hands, as if struggling with himself how to dispose of it. At length he threw it back, saying, resolutely—"No, I will not degrade him by offering a reward to his affection; nor will I injure him by paying for his obedience.—But, harkee, Harrison, find out during your journey what there is he wishes for, and tell me, that we may send it after him; 'twill be

his birthday soon, and that will afford me an excuse for a present."

Harrison returned, saying—" Master Henry had consoled himself all the way back, by proposing to beg a holiday, and to make a feast for the boys on sir Francis's recovery ;" and it will be readily supposed his intentions were put in execution. The good baronet dealt with no niggard hand the means of gratifying this wish; and it would be difficult to find many hours in a man's life so supremely happy as Henry's, while he presided at the youthful feast, and added to its luxuries the zest of feeling and gratitude.

CHAP. XII.

From the period we have spoken of, sir Francis and his lady enjoyed a still greater taste for each other's society, and a stronger perception of the consequence each was of to the other, than they had ever known before; and as the baronet was for a long time left in a delicate state of health, he became still more wedded to home and domestic society than he had ever been; but as his health returned, he resumed his country occupations with new energy, and entered into agricultural pursuits especially, with great vivacity. General Deverell spent much the greater part of his time with his niece, becoming particularly attached to Louisa, over whose acquirements, manners, and opening mind, he watched with all the tender anxiety of a parent, and the admiration of one who, as a stranger to children in general, and long de-

prived of a pleasure congenial to his nature, was ready to conclude that earth had never seen, Heaven never bestowed, a being in whom so many excellencies met. It was therefore necessary that the parents of Louisa should watch over her with no common care, to obviate the evil tendency his well-meaning, kind-hearted, but injudicious flattery could not fail to have on a young female, whose charms of person and whose talents were but too likely to lead her to an overweaning opinion of herself.

Yet it appeared certain even to their alarmed minds, that the evils of Louisa's disposition would not prove pride or vanity; she was by nature too timid for the first, too strong for the last: there was in her a sense of modesty so deep and so sincere, a simplicity and self-mistrust, that called for more than usual encouragement in whatever she attempted; and she was embued with a sensibility not only so acute, but so profound, that it was impossible to direct her mind by reproof, with-

out producing so much disproportioned suffering, as to lead to an extreme of indulgence by way of atonement. She appeared born to be governed by her affections only; actuated by them, she became firm, courageous, prompt, and active, as well as gentle, docile, obedient, and patient; a single glance of the eye was command, a smile was reward; acute and penetrative, her delicate mind felt ever that "praise undeserved is satire in disguise;" and when conscious of error in her carriage or temper, if she happened to be reproved, she became instantly humbled, and with all the ingenuousness her timidity admitted, would avow her fault, or by instantly abandoning it, prove her own detestation of it; thus even her good uncle's error proved useful to her, while the consciousness of meriting praise spread over her mind not only a delightful calm, but an animating influence, which led to the higher attainments of virtue.

Children who reside in the country, under proper tutors, have great advantages

from local circumstances; the book of nature is opened before them, and all that knowledge most interesting to man is presented at every page. Louisa was led not only by a fine imagination, and that spirit of inquiry natural to youth, but by the tenderness and benevolence of her heart, to inquire after every living thing; and her search was not confined to animated nature, for wherever her eye discerned beauty, her heart felt interest; and though birds and lambkins, kittens and dogs, were prime objects of her care, violets, lillies, and roses, shared it; and in rearing a drooping plant, or cherishing a sickly flower, her whole mind would be so engaged as to render her entirely dead to a thousand frivolities, the food of vanity and selfishness in other girls of her condition and person. Without abandoning her person to the mercy of the elements, or affecting to teach her that she was plain or brown, lady Mowbray never checked the disposition to an act of mercy, or the investigation necessary for attaining know-

ledge, by expressing fears for her complexion, or anxiety about her clothes. She taught her the proper estimate of beauty by the degree of attention she bestowed upon it in others, and the true conception of the excellence of virtue, by proving in her own conduct that its attainment was the great business of existence; and that the exercise of the affections, the power of exciting esteem, its rich reward.

Henry bore as decidedly those characteristics which are thought peculiar to man, as Louisa did those considered purely feminine; he was warm-hearted, brave, impetuous, but generous, open to conviction, and candid in confession; his discernment was quick, and his mind powerful; but his judgment was easily misled by his passions; he was subject to loving and hating, but the excellence of his temper, as well as his disposition and principles, made him quickly abandon the latter, but persist in the former. There was an attachment between this brother and sister rarely

to be met with; it appeared less that of nature than of friendship. Henry delighted in Louisa's society, because he ever found an opportunity of doing her good; she took her early lessons with him, she practised her music for his sake, and in all their rambles he was her protector, in their errors her defender. Louisa was on her part certain that Henry was happy with her, and that made her happy; in receiving instruction she was conscious of bestowing pleasure, and she therefore sought it with twofold vigilance. She was aware that Henry was passionate and impetuous, and she sought with all her power to wean him from these errors, by the gentlest persuasions, and ever sought to hide him from observation in the moments of his irritation; and in order to do this, she constrained herself from all propensity to partake his error; so that although easily hurt, from the too quick perception of injury, she yet acquired a species of patience very seldom combined with acute feeling, and became herself what she wished her bro-

ther to be, and which in a great measure he became. Thus mutual affection, and the same mild restraint and prudent management, rendered two dispositions of distinct character in many points essentially alike, and at least equally amiable and well disposed.

But the time came when Henry, used to the society of boys at school, "disdained the limits of that little reign" the powers and inclinations of Louisa prescribed; he was sixteen when she had entered her thirteenth year, and he was no longer content with the simple round of amusements which the vacations had been wont to afford; and when Louisa's drawing had been criticized, her plants glanced at, and her lessons at the piano praised, Henry talked of shooting and hunting, but especially of fighting; and affected rather the company of the baronet, than that of his daughter.

Louisa, who wished to behold him the "guardian, not the tyrant of the fields," was vexed sometimes, and sometimes

grieved with these dispositions; yet she still fondly loved, and was beloved by him, and heard with great regret the assurance her maid gave, that "he would no longer be tied to her apron-strings," especially when her mother's manners confirmed the assurance, by requiring from her the same attention to her studies she was wont to impose, and began to inform her that the duties of women were distinct from those of men; and that it was only during infancy their pursuits could be universally congenial.

At this time Henry formed an acquaintance with a very amiable youth, one year younger than himself, the eldest son of viscount Welbrooke, a nobleman whose seat was in the vicinity of Sefton Hall. About half a century ago there had been a marriage connection between the families, by which means the residence of sir Francis had come into his family, which the late viscount had, with no very justifiable intentions, endeavoured, but vainly, to regain; of course a coolness had taken place be-

tween him and the uncle of sir Francis, its last inhabitant, which had so far extended to their successors, as to have prevented any immediate intercourse from being sought on either side, although there existed not the slightest portion of ill will. When, therefore, chance introduced the honourable Edward Sefton to sir Francis, through the medium of Henry, he was received without any portion of prejudice against him as an individual, and treated with the easy politeness and genuine hospitality usual with sir Francis and his lady.

Edward was an engaging, rather than a striking boy; he was backward in his growth, timid in his manners, and though evidently alive to kindness, seemed fearful of expressing the emotion it awakened. His countenance was open, but its expression was serious almost to melancholy, an effect partly produced by the paleness of his complexion, and the character of his full black eye, which was shaded by such long eyelashes, that until they were raised,

his face seemed robbed of that illumination so natural and so beautiful in youth. Perhaps it was this sombre character that rendered his smile so singular, so enchanting, that when any thing happened to call it forth, it seemed to surprise and delight all who were around him; and the eye which had carelessly glanced upon an unformed, pale-faced stripling, became suddenly sensible of the power of beauty and intelligence united in his person; and this was more particularly experienced in Sefton Hall, because the inhabitants had been used to contemplate Louisa's exquisite features lighted up by the same peculiar radiance; and although Edward could not boast the dimpled graces which were her peculiar characteristic, nor that change of complexion in which every finer hue displayed that sensibility,

——— where such perfection wrought,
That one might almost say her body thought,

yet still every person was struck with the

similarity there appeared in this respect between them.

Edward was so much milder, so much more thoughtful than Henry, that they did not appear so much drawn together by similarity of taste or disposition, as necessity; yet it was plain that their acquaintance ripened into a sincere attachment, and as they were really alike in all leading points, being both warm-hearted and well intentioned, having both general knowledge, and general benevolence, the difference in their characters appeared to have a good effect on each, especially the younger, who, in associating so much with the frank, open-hearted, courageous Henry, shook off his own *mauvaise honte,* and seemed as if he should even dare to be merry. He evidently loved to be at the Hall so much, that he left it with regret to accompany even his companion; but he never returned with him without evidently experiencing that relief accorded by the society of the gay and agreeable, when they are likewise the innocent.

"People may say what they please of education," said sir Francis one day; "and no one can be more anxious to benefit from it than I am; but whoever looks into human life itself, must see that the bias of Nature is very strong, so strong, that I think education should follow her lead; and in planting even virtue, should remember to assort her peculiar seeds to the soil before them.

"Look at those two boys; one was born in poverty, nursed in sorrow; the first sounds that met his ears were the sighs of his mother, the first object that appalled his eyes was the corpse of his father; yet true to the native energies derived from his own inherent character, he lisped comfort to the one, and endeavoured to succour the other: true to the same principles, we perceive him grow up generous, courageous, ingenuous, pursuing too often the first to profusion, the second to folly, and the third to weakness, and this under the peculiar restraint which is generally

supposed to induce meanness, disguise, and servility—the restraint of dependence, the tutorship of a father-in-law, one, too, naturally reserved, systematically determinate, and even in marriage retaining the peculiarities of an old bachelor."

Lady Mowbray smiled.

"Look at the other; the heir of a noble house, and doubtlessly well acquainted with the circumstance that his mother's jointure exceeds even his father's, and, like that, must be one day his own; without a rival in the talents or *agremens* of a younger brother, and finding only increase of consequence from the circumstance of having sisters, who, from their very birth, have been taught to look up to him; his cheek has ever rested on the pillow of plenty, his cradle been rocked by the hand of indulgence, and his lullaby sung by the tongue of adulation: the parade of education, the praise of titled acquaintance, and the hopes of family alliances, have doubtless been whispered in his ear, with all the "glorious circum-

stance" of rank and power incident to his situation in life; yet you perceive him not only utterly unspoiled by these circumstances, but even labouring under a timidity, oppressed by a melancholy which could only be derived from nature, and which buries his talents, and, to a certain degree, eclipses his virtues, of course may injure his usefulness, and is certainly calculated to give a very incorrect idea of his character, and the many good traits he possesses."

"It is impossible," replied lady Mowbray, "not to grant that disposition, and even manners, as frequently descend to children as features and complexion, and Henry is a decided proof of the fact, because he resembles his father in many points which appear to be the effect of imitation, they follow the model so closely. But yet I think education has made the principal part of both his character, and that of his friend; pardon me if I say, you have taken a very superficial view of their

childhood's annals; such a view as the world in general takes, and which you could only have adopted from your aptness to disclaim all personal merit. My boy has been by no means depressed by the evils of fortune; the sorrows of his opening life have been long ago obliterated, and have had no other effect on his mind than that of increasing his sensibility to the happiness he has enjoyed; and the circumstance of his being a son-in-law even to a person you are pleased to designate reserved and particular, &c. has left him more open to the growth of his characteristic virtues and errors (for they do not amount to vices) than he would otherwise have been, since your delicacy has always exempted *him* from severity; and where you deemed punishment necessary, and would have inflicted it on your own child, you have mitigated it in *his* case. On the other hand, he being sensible that your forbearance arose from the most noble and amiable motives, and that all he received from your goodness was the

act of bounty, not the claim of nature, became of course more grateful to you, more ashamed of having offended you, and more anxious to obtain your esteem, and even to imitate that which he so intensely admired, than as your own son it is probable he would have been. A more easy, happy childhood was never passed through than his has been; for it has never known any sorrow but that occasioned by faults which led to repentance, whose griefs must be felt by every one: the dependance you speak of he knows only by name; his wants have been ever so amply supplied, that he can form no idea on the subject; and as your enforcement of obedience has been ever regulated by your desire for his good, he has no inducement to believe that the crouchings of servility would answer any end with you, but exactly the contrary; of course he has had no temptation to adopt them: *his* feelings, *your* example and your precepts, have equally led him to combine the submission of duty and wisdom, with manly integrity and ra-

tional independence. As to poor Edward, I think it too probable that the circumstances of his life have been quite as likely to form the characteristics you justly remark, as his natural disposition; and I have a great notion we shall find they have done it."

Sir Francis shook his head incredulously.

"Nay, sir Francis, consider it is of the heirs of great houses Darwin too justly says—

> Oft hears the crimson couch unpitied plains,
> And many a tear the tassell'd pillow stains;

and although this might not be the case during the actual infancy of Edward, yet depend upon it that boy has not slept on roses; the tender dejection, the deep thought, the retiring manners, so remarkable in him, have been produced by some species of sorrow and anxiety, not natural to his situation, I grant, but in some way arising out of it. The family spend such short summers, they are little known here;

but I have been told that lord and lady Welbrooke are not a happy couple; and what greater trouble can there be to a child of sensibility than witnessing the disunion of his parents, especially as he is evidently a boy whom somebody has disposed to piety, and whose mind is uncommonly enlightened for his years? should he owe this to one parent only, what must the other appear in his eyes?"

Sir Francis acknowledged there might be something in this statement, and they both dwelt on the probability, until they felt more interest than they had ever done in him; and this sensation was increased with every succeeding visit, so that the boy became actually endeared to them; and as he evidently improved beneath the meliorating influence of their friendship, there could be no doubt but he returned their affection most cordially, although his eyes were the only heralds of his heart.

These affectionate sensations were not partaken by Louisa, except in those mo-

ments when Edward appeared depressed, or overpowered by bashfulness; then, indeed, her native sweetness and benevolence led her to regard him with the truest tenderness; and she seldom failed, by a thousand little unobtrusive attentions, to draw him out of his melancholy; but in general she was too apt to consider him as one who robbed her of her rights in Henry; and to one whose every pleasure was concentered in the exercise of the affections, this was no light injury. All who love intensely and inordinately are jealous of their object; their jealousy may be devoid alike of suspicion or malignity, but still there is dross in the gold which calls for the refiner's hand. Lady Mowbray perceived this in her child, and she took such pains to eradicate it, that Louisa at length began to look less shyly at Edward, and hear him propose a ride to her brother without the glow or the petulance of chagrin marking her ingenuous countenance; she began to conform to her fate, and submit to sharing that which she had hitherto

engrossed; but in proportion as she relinquished Henry, she attached herself still more to her mother, who not being able at this time to provide her a young female friend, who would be in every respect suitable as a companion to one so finely organized, so dangerously gifted, resigned herself as far as she was able, consistent with her duties, to becoming the companion and friend, as well as guardian of her daughter.

Sir Francis, who now despaired of a son, and was most tenderly attached to his heiress, readily seconded his lady's views, and was happy to see her relax into the playmate, or rise into the governess, with this beloved being, on whom every care and every accomplishment was bestowed, that could add grace to the gifts of nature, and give value to the charms of beauty. But it was the especial care of both parents to give strength to a mind rendered comparatively weak by its own excellence, and which resembled the fine-wrought or-

naments of gold, which appear beauteous in proportion as they are attenuated, and exhibit fragility proportioned to their excellence.

CHAP. XIII.

We have already hinted at Henry's early prejudice for the army, which increased with his years, and his acquaintance with his uncle, which of course became much more intimate on his quitting school. Sir Francis would have greatly preferred giving him a bias for the laws and legislature of his country; but in a season when so much of the real interests of the country were at stake, when not only her existence, but that of all civilized nations, depended on the gallant exertions of her brave sons, he deemed it almost a sin to counteract the wishes of a brave youth, who considered the sword of his unfortunate father a glorious inheritance, and preferred a life of toil and danger in the tented field, to ease and luxury at home; he therefore consulted with the general as to the best means of promoting his wishes

agreeable to his prospects in life; and in consequence of their united endeavours, Henry, on attaining his seventeenth year, became a cornet in the —— regiment of dragoons, and very shortly afterwards obtained his wish, in being sent to the Peninsula.

Although this youth was dear to lady Mowbray; not only as her son, a son worthy of her fondest love, but as the representative of his father, whose memory still sailed down the tide of time, crowned with the fadeless myrtles which virgin love and tender sorrow had adorned it with, and of course to part with him was dismembering her very self, yet she did not oppose his wishes; herself the daughter, niece, and wife of soldiers, each of whom had not only adorned his profession, but his nature, and whose sorrows and disappointments in their profession had failed to disgust or affrighten them, she had early used herself to consider this as a trial that would doubtless visit her; and therefore without affecting the character of the Spartan mo-

ther, which was foreign to her nature, she yet obtained the higher praise belonging to the Christian, who dares to trust her treasure even on a perilous sea, conscious that an all-seeing eye sees and directs the storm.

Parting with Henry was the first real sorrow Louisa had ever known, and she suffered from it so much as to awaken the most painful solicitude in both her parents, and to call for their increased vigilance towards the sensibility, which, in its acuteness, was at once her charm, her misfortune, and her fault. Trembling for the welfare of their treasure, they became as anxious for her who remained, as for him thus committed to a dangerous and tempting profession; and in earnestly entreating Divine assistance for both, they happily led the susceptible mind and tender heart of their daughter to look to the same source of divine comfort, to spread before the throne of Almighty mercy her wants and her fears, and seek for resignation and fortitude as

the gift of religious confidence and pious hope.

Louisa was assisted in thus seeking for comfort from its highest source, by the talents, and, still more, the pure taste by which she was distinguished. She had a fine perception of the beauties of poetry, and possessed the imagination requisite for the highest species of composition; nor was she devoid of the powers requisite for its lighter labours; and of course the sublime enthusiasm, the ardent zeal, and profound tenderness which constitute the finest essence of poetry, and which every poet feels in his happiest moments, (whatever be his personal deviations and vices,) was congenial with her feelings, and the most delightful occupation of her mind. In taking this direction, her heart more frequently obtained felicity than realized serenity. She was enabled to present the object of her solicitude to the will of God, or to behold, through the vista of time, honours and rewards await him; but it was not easy

for her to sit down contented with his lot, and calmly resign him to whatever might befall him: but it was not towards Henry alone her solicitude was awakened; the slightest indisposition in either parent attracted her instant care, her fond alarm; and towards servants, friends, cottagers, and even animals, still was she the same attentive, tender, affectionate being,

"As she, the general mother, were of all."

Well might the parents of such a one rejoice with trembling, as they looked forward to that time when a "master passion might swallow up the rest," and with it the peace, the happiness, perhaps the honour of their house.

When Edward first visited them after the departure of Henry, Louisa's reception of him was a flood of tears so violent, that lady Mowbray was induced to mix reproof with consolation—reproof which at least affected Edward exceedingly, as he rose to depart immediately, observing, with much trepidation in his manner, "that it

was very natural for Miss Mowbray to be disturbed by the sight of a person who must remind her of her brother."

Louisa felt that she had acted foolishly, and in a degree unjustly, by subjecting one to pain who had ever most delicately endeavoured to save her from every unpleasant sensation; blushing, she turned to Edward, and said, "Yes, you remind me of Henry; but—but I don't dislike seeing you, for all that." A glow of the most animating pleasure rose on the heretofore dismayed countenance of Edward; and forgetting that he had rung for his poney, he instantly sat down again; then conscious that he had in some way acted foolishly, he blushed in extreme confusion, and bade farewell; saying in a hasty, incoherent manner, something about departing himself for college the next week.

When he was gone, sir Francis lamented that they should lose him. "That boy," said he, "has wound himself round my heart, not more by the soundness of his understanding, as it developes itself in con-

versation, than by the simplicity of his manners, and the real goodness of his heart. When he entered the room tears sprang to his eyes, but he not only checked them, but avoided mentioning Henry's name, lest he should hurt his mother; yet you see he could find a ready apology for Louisa, whose conduct was exactly what he avoided."

"He is a good-enough kind of boy," said Louisa; "indeed I don't think there can be a better; but he is not like Henry, papa."

"He has not Henry's vivacity, my dear."

"Oh no! nor Henry's courage; he will never be a soldier, I'll answer for it."

"Henry himself had a different opinion; he told me that Edward had more cool courage than any boy of his acquaintance; and observed, Edward would be a general, when he was at best made captain commandante, to storm a fort."

"But I know when the hay-stacks were on fire last summer, Henry climbed directly to the top of one, whilst Edward

walked quietly round, and then called to the servants."

"True, my dear, but before the servants arrived, this same quiet Edward had, at the risk of his life, extricated his friend from the perilous situation his rashness, which you call courage, had placed him in."

"Yes, he is very good; he always does right; but he will never be a hero; at least not one of my kind of heroes; he may make a Nicias, but would never have been a Leonidas."

"You have paid him a greater compliment than you intended, Louisa; for doubtless the latter was the greater character of the two; one devoted himself for the country he loved, and the cause he idolized; the other for his country doubtless, but under counsels he disapproved, and in a cause he abhorred: the one fell gloriously, the other ignominiously, yet with equal, nay, superior virtue."

"But every body loves Leonidas best, papa."

"Not every body, for I love Nicias as

well, though I have all my schoolboy feelings still glowing about me; and I wish you, my dear, never to read about great men, nor think about great boys, without exercising your judgment, and examining what is really good and praiseworthy in them; and remembering, that although the qualities which excite love are very desirable, those which demand esteem are still more so; in fact, I wish you to love only those whom you can approve, instead of approving them because you love them."

"I both love and approve Henry."

"I am not speaking of Henry; you do not love him more than I do; nor can you love him more than I wish you to do; but you will learn to be very contracted in your notions, and very confined in your philanthropy, if you make one person the standard by which to measure all your acquaintance."

"I don't want to love a many people; I like to love a few, papa, very, *very* dearly, and so I do. I love you, and mamma, and ——"

"My sweet child, I know you do, and your love is very precious to us, yet we would not have even the light glow so intensely as to scorch us, you know; we would rather have its rays diffused, in order that it may bestow a more general benefit, and shed on us a softer lustre."

Louisa departed with a sigh, and sir Francis observed with another, that "the girl had listened to Henry's passion for his profession, till she had imbibed it, and could see no excellence but in courage, no virtue but in a soldier."

A faint blush passed the cheeks of his lady, from a consciousness that she possessed her share of what might be termed the family mania, just at this time; and she observed, "it was natural for women to think more highly of courage than any other virtue."

"I believe so," said sir Francis, "and yet it is a virtue of a very questionable shape, and very frequently ought to be denominated a quality only, though I grant it the most attractive one in the catalogue.

I must own myself there is something very puzzling in the circumstance, that women, the more timid and defenceless they are in themselves, the more fond they become of these blustering, flashy, cut-and-thrust beaux: she who would die to see a wound, can kiss the hand that makes it; and the trembling, weeping being, whose soul would exhale on sight of a battle, yet dearly loves the glorious conqueror who spread the field with blood, and scattered desolation around him."

"There is no reasoning on this point further than to observe, that it is a happy instinct which shows the weak that the strong are their natural protectors."

"That observation is too vague and too general to satisfy me; I remain like Desdemona's father, surprised 'how one can love what she doth fear to look on."

"But surely our great poet never was happier than in his delineation of the female character in the gentle Desdemona, nor in the purity of her affection for the valiant Moor: he proves that it is per-

fectly natural for such a woman to love such a man."

"Yes, but he gave the Moor many good qualities besides his valour; and a man must have *many* other, or he would not make a girl like Louisa happy, although that alone would, I perceive, but too plainly make an impression of the strongest nature upon an imagination like hers; it is therefore our duty, my dear, to guard against this propensity while it is in our power, by leading her to the consideration of less brilliant excellencies, but such as constitute the sober happiness of sober women. God forbid that I should depreciate the exalted, and often amiable characters of our brave soldiers and sailors; many of whom I know personally to be capable of every domestic duty; but when I consider how small a portion of woman's happiness can consist in those rejoicings which are the meed of valour, it is no wonder that I wish my only child to tread the calmer path of life, especially when I consider her temper and disposition."

"She would indeed be a severe sufferer as a soldier's wife, she feels so exquisitely; but by the same rule, she would enjoy exquisitely too."

"True, she would have hours of bliss, and years of torture; how you, Louisa, can bear the picture for a moment of such a being so situated, I cannot conceive. God protect *me* from it!"

The baronet, greatly affected, rose; and lady Mowbray, with the tenderest sympathy, declared, "that it would be extremely painful to her to see Louisa the wife of a soldier, however high his rank; but in so young a girl, she thought there was little to fear;" adding, "that for her own part, she would do her best to eradicate from the mind of her daughter every thing that could tend to inflame her imagination, or affect her conduct on the subject."

What lady Mowbray said she would do, she fully intended to perform; but she was not aware of the bias of her own mind, which became more partial to the army the more she became connected with it,

and interested in it through the medium of her son; and she insensibly fostered rather than destroyed the propensity Louisa felt; for though her precepts when uttered were against it, her heart was evidently but little in unison with the newly-adopted opinions which she offered.

CHAP. XIV.

Two years had added grace and dignity to the loveliness of Louisa's person, and considerably strengthened and improved her mind, and given to Henry a considerable accession of every desirable quality, when at the siege of ———, he had the misfortune to receive a ball in his shoulder, which eventually occasioned him to obtain leave of absence, and return to his country and friends.

This beloved youth was received with a welcome equally warm and affecting: he was pale and thin, and his complexion so brown, that all the fair and ruddy hues which once distinguished it, seemed to have taken their final departure: his eyes, the expression of his countenance, and the animation of his manners, were the same. His person, and especially the alteration

caused in it by his recent sufferings, reminded lady Mowbray so much of his father, as to affect her very painfully; and Louisa in gazing at him, and considering how much he must have toiled and endured since he had left them, frequently found the tears stealing down her cheek. She was never weary of listening to the details he gave her father when they were requested, (for Henry was much less fond of relating his adventures than might have been expected), and she still took that delight in stimulating her own sensibilities which sir Francis secretly objected to; but he had the happiness to observe, that she had much more self-command and self-knowledge than she formerly possessed; and he indulged in the hope of seeing her as virtuous and happy, as she was amiable and engaging.

Henry's first care was to inquire for his friend, who was still at college, and had been scarcely seen by the family during his absence. He was received by lord Welbrooke with a politeness and attention

never shown to him before, and informed that at no very distant day, Sefton would visit home, when his company would add so much to his happiness, that he was pressed to give him the meeting. Lord Welbrooke was very different to his son; he was a man of such perfect politeness, such engaging suavity, that it was not easy to refuse any thing he pressed; but as company was now pouring in fast, in consequence of Henry's return, he could not make any positive engagement for himself.

The good general, it will be readily supposed, hastened, in despite of his infirmities, to see and welcome his beloved nephew; and shortly afterwards, though not called so much by particular, as general affection, lady Selthorpe arrived also; she appeared as gay as ever, but that gaiety was so frequently excessive, that it appeared overstrained in the eyes of the baronet, who feared lest it should be a mask to hide uneasiness; but when he reflected

how little his sister had been calculated from her very birth to dissemble, or even to hide the feeling of the moment, he concluded he was mistaken, and attributed the extraordinary vivacity of her manners to that of the world she lived in. She was in her person a very fine woman; she was in the habit of receiving admiration, and she was at the period when a younger race of beauties were necessarily dividing her honours; and although the empire of wit prolongs that of beauty, yet as they both are subject to languish and fade, sir Francis had observed many ladies call in the aid of extraordinary animation, and not only "look delightfully with all their might," but rattle and laugh with all their strength; and he concluded lady Selthorpe had become one of the number. The baronet could not help sighing as he contemplated this view of his only, his beloved sister; he knew that she was capable of being a far more valuable character than either a wit or a beauty, and was convinced that her marriage connection, if not unhappy, was

at least ungenial. The colonel had never accompanied her to his house but once; he was now, it appeared, frivolously engaged; and it appeared but too plain that his sister took refuge in the gaieties of life, to supply the deficiencies of its solid comforts; but he honoured the silence she observed on these topics too much, to break it even by a brother's inquiries.

Louisa was exceedingly fond of her aunt, by whom she had ever been treated with the most distinguished affection; and in possession of her society, and that of Henry's, she appeared so rich in happiness, that all the pure pleasure of youthful hilarity played on her countenance, and danced in her step; a more delighted and delightful being never rose on the vision of poetic fancy, and the sense of that bliss thus enjoyed and bestowed, was, like the vision of fancy, more exquisite from being evanescent; you saw, that as a finer sensibility of joy inspired her, so might it doom her to a more incurable, or at least acuter sense of sorrow: the father saw this and trembled,

but yet he hoped, that from the principles of integrity he had instilled into her mind, and from the sense of religion which actuated her every action, and mingled with every emotion of her heart, she might be led through a tempting world without error, and find consolation in its best source when her day of trial came. Fearing as he did that his sister's better part was too much swallowed up by the frivolities of the day, he could hardly deem her the most eligible friend for his daughter; but considering that she saw her only in company with her own mother, whose simplicity, sound understanding, true piety, and unaffected goodness, were justly appreciated, as well as tenderly beloved, he concluded no harm could possibly arise to her; and he hoped in such society her ladyship would feel herself restored to nature and herself.

Henry soon experienced the advantages to his health which might have been expected under such happy circumstances; and as Louisa one morning complimented him on the return of his complexion, lady

Selthorpe observed, that she would not have him get fairer for the world; he was now the true Spanish brown, and what with the new whiskers, the natural Brutus curls *en tout ensemble*, he beat the ——n-——ton hollow, and she should like of all things to exhibit him at her routs, before he got any better.

"At present, Hal, you are exactly the thing, well enough to be admired by dashing belles, who like handsome red-coats, and yet sufficiently *il penseroso* to attract sentimental Misses—so stand still for a month or two, I beseech ye."

"Don't make the boy vain, my lady!" said the general.

"Oh, I can't; 'tis you, general, must do that."

"*Me*, madam!"

"*You*, general, for depend on't, neither his fierce whiskers on the one hand, nor his bloodless cheeks on the other, will gain him one tender smile, or cause one inviting sigh to issue from the coral lips of beauty, unless it is known that the young

officer with the Scotch name is nephew and heir to general Deverell, who came from the Indies some years ago as rich as a nabob: such magic words as these, general, whispered in the circles of fashion, would rouse not only Misses, but mothers, who are much the best negociators, and you would soon see Hal, like his great namesake, a 'thriving wooer,' though a 'plain soldier.'"

"From such Misses, and such negociators, may your ladyship deliver him, say I! though I confess I wish to see him married; but he is very young yet."

"Indeed I am, my good sir, so young, that——"

"My dear boy, I hope you don't object to matrimony?"

"By no means, sir, when a man has nothing else to do; but I hope you will allow at present that I have sufficient engagements on my hands without thinking of that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried her ladyship; "Hal, I perceive whatever you may have

inspired, you have been untouched by *la belle passion* yourself."

"Indeed, my lady, you are mistaken; I fell desperately in love at Portsmouth, and found it very troublesome too. I had a kind of perpetual skirmish with it during my whole voyage."

"Umph! it lasted a fortnight then?"

"Oh, longer than that, and was monstrous troublesome. In fact, I never got rid of it till we had been some time in hot service—it went off then, of course."

"True, Hal, when you burn your finger, hold it to the fire—the greater heat extracts the lesser. Has no other spark from the same furnace blistered you?"

"Yes, I remember Victorina's black eyes were very troublesome at Coimbra; but my wound put *her* out of my head."

"Properly designated; your wounds have been indeed those which 'play round the head, but never reach the heart.' From such fancies, however, the idle and happy are very subject to make those tyrant pas-

sions, which eventually tear the heart to pieces; and I am sadly afraid the time will come, when you will be among the bleeding victims of this species of conquest."

"My lady Selthorpe this! why, 'tis Saul among the prophets! whoever thought to hear you deprecate the tyranny of the passions so gravely?" said sir Francis.

Lady Selthorpe looked confused, as one who had been off her guard, and could not immediately rally. Henry relieved her, by saying, with great vivacity, "that he considered himself too good a soldier to yield to slavery so implicitly as she foretold;" adding, "what can you have seen in me, my lady, that should make you think I could play at all for love, and turn my sword's point to scribbling sonnets on my mistress's eyebrow?"

"You have the weakness *hereditarily*, there's a good deal in that; *naturally* it has already touched you a little, and every body sees in you abundant combustibles; and, lastly, *professionally*; valour and vanity, without any positive relationship, are

yet frequently coupled in young soldiers; and they alike inform you all pretty early, that 'none but the brave deserve the fair.'"

"Surely that is true!" said Louisa, darting from under her long eyelashes a sparkling gleam of playful light, as she looked interrogatively towards her aunt.

The question was not answered, for at this moment lord Welbrooke was announced. Sir Francis received him with that air of open hospitality and easy dignity, which was peculiar to him. To lady Selthorpe he was known, as an acquaintance of the colonel's; but such was the elegant familiarity of his manners, the fascination of his conversation, that in a short time they all became intimate with his lordship, and with pleasure accepted from him the invitation he had given Henry, to dine with him, *en famille,* the day on which his son returned.

Our party found, besides the family of lord Welbrooke, which consisted of his lady and three daughters, lord Glenfalloch, a Scottish nobleman, and a very interesting

old officer, major Steuart, of the same nation. Lady Welbrooke appeared a delicate woman, whose features had once been beautiful, but wore at present a character of coldness and contraction, as if impaired either by personal suffering, or injured by reserve and fretfulness of temper. It was evident that her son resembled her more than his father, in his features; and Henry immediately fancied, that to such a stern mother his young friend was indebted for that pensive air and extreme timidity, which was so remarkable in him; and with the hastiness too common to his age, he condemned her as a cross, foolish mother; and to say the truth, with the exception of the viscountess, the rest of the party thought with him a good deal.

The young ladies were fine girls, and Emma, the eldest, who was only a year younger than her brother, appeared particularly pleasing; she was merely a visitant at home, as she generally resided with an aunt of her mother's, a woman of large fortune, of whom (from the partiality she

had evinced for her) she was the presumptive heiress. Adelaide, the next, appeared a lively romp, under good government. Emily was yet a child.

To the great mortification of Henry, Mr. Sefton was not arrived; but he soon became consoled for the delay, from the animated conversation of the Caledonian gentleman, who claimed him for a countryman, appeared well acquainted with his family, and in speaking of it, invested it with a dignity not less new than engaging to the young soldier. Henry had been rendered a little clannish from his mother's recital, as far as she remembered it, of facts related to her by his father, and he was therefore the better prepared for the impression now made upon him in favour of his country, if such it could be called. From the inhabitants of the Highlands, the conversation naturally turned upon the country; and here eloquence was exhausted in panegyric—so much of sublimity and beauty, of all that could delight the eye and interest the heart, was expatiated upon

and described, that not only was the youthful part of the audience warmed into wonder and desire, but the general himself declared, that if he could only ensure one month of tolerable weather, he would set out for the north directly, for he was persuaded he had in all his travels met with nothing to be compared with it; he however proposed that his nephew should do it, saying, "he knew not how his leave of absence could be employed better."

A look, that spoke a volume of petition, was shot from Louisa to her father; and it was seconded by the mild orbs of her mother.

"I have not the least objection," said sir Francis, "if you are equal to the fatigue of such a journey."

"Heigh presto!" exclaimed lady Selthorpe; "how many familiars do you employ, good people, to carry on your secret intelligence? you settle a journey to the Antipodes with less trouble and consultation than I should have in ordering my chair for the opera."

Lady Welbrooke at this moment offered sir Francis some fruit, and she did it with a smile which so animated her pale and sunken features, and with a gesture so indicative of good-will and esteem, that he scarcely could believe she was the same being: the regards he threw upon her, by telling her he was surprised, probably hurt her; for it is certain a tear suffused her eye, and in her anxiety to escape further observation, she retired with the ladies to the drawing room.

The young people spoke, with all the avidity natural to their age, of the charms of a tour through the Highlands; and lady Mowbray entered into the scheme with all the enthusiasm natural to one whose feelings were united by a fine though latent tie to the country of which she spoke; but lady Welbrooke had relapsed again into the sombre being they had first beheld; but she was soon recalled, most happily recalled —the voice of Sefton was heard on the stairs, and the colour rushed impetuously to her cheek—" It is, it must be Edward!"

she exclaimed, and flew towards the door. In a moment she was in his arms; and never was a mother pressed more fondly to the breast of a tender son. For a moment the eyes of that son were cast round the room, but as quickly they returned, and rested with sweet satisfaction only on his mother, till the approach of his sisters, each fondly claiming his attention, with an air of assurance that they were all equally beloved, recalled him by degrees to the recollection of other company.

Lady Welbrooke's streaming eyes seemed to give her a right to seek a moment's retirement, and lady Mowbray saying, with great sympathy, "I know what it is to receive a son," she gently pressed her fingers, and withdrew; while Edward, advancing to pay his respects to lady Selthorpe, appeared arrested by the appearance of Louisa, whom he had not seen for more than a year, and who was in that time so much grown, and in every respect so much improved, as to render his apparent surprise very natural.

Devoted to study, Edward had hitherto spent but little time in female society; his mind was therefore more polished than his manners, though these possessed gentleness, and exhibited the goodness of his heart in a manner that in time became insinuating; but he always appeared to some disadvantage in the presence of his father, who was absolutely fascinating when it was his pleasure or his interest to become so.

The moment lord Welbrooke learned his son's arrival, he flew into the drawing-room, and welcomed him with the utmost warmth and tenderness, followed, of course, by the gentlemen, of whom Henry was the most forward. The two young men were so evidently happy to meet again, that their sensations appeared to inspire all around them with the first feelings, and the memory of the first endearments of life; and the evening was spent in the most engaging social intercourse. In the course of it, lady Welbrooke, unbending, as it were, slowly, to the reception of pleasure,

took repeated opportunities of addressing Louisa, in doing which she displayed a rich vein of information, and a refined taste; but Louisa shrunk so much from the idea she had adopted of her ladyship's austerity, that she could not in return display the cultivation she really possessed; but the little she did say served to prove the jewel was really worthy the high-wrought casket which enshrined it.

Sir Francis observed all around him, and became convinced, from every thing, of the regular improvement and real excellence of his favourite Edward. He saw how dearly he was beloved by his sisters, that he was the very life of life to his mother, and that every servant who entered the room was happy in an excuse for approaching him, and that respect and love were equally united in their looks. He was well aware that the esteem thus bestowed was the consequence of solid worth, since he did not possess the charm of attraction, by which some are loved without merit, and

respected without virtue. He perceived, likewise, notwithstanding the peculiar retirement of his manners in his father's presence, yet that the promise of his boyhood was fulfilling; his mind was singularly furnished for his years, with all that was useful in the legislator, or ornamental to the gentleman, and that his conversation exhibited all the graces of unaffected eloquence modestly delivered.

Of course, each party, on their return, expressed their opinion on the individuals of a family with which they appeared likely to become very intimate; but the young people were too desirous of pushing their proposed jaunt to the Highlands, to think much of any thing else; and the general, who did not find himself very well, proposed returning before they set out.

Henry insisted on seeing him safe home, and accordingly became his escort, an attention suitable to both; and although sir Francis had not all the enthusiasm of the rest of his party, he yet set about the ne-

cessary preparations with much spirit, happy to make those happy who were naturally and justly dear to him.

Louisa looked into maps, made extracts, and affected to arrange their tour; but her mind continually adverted to Ossian's Poems, and spirits of winds and warriors, weeping maidens and majestic ghosts, swam before her sight. She did not, however, neglect her drawing apparatus, and anticipated the greatest pleasure she could enjoy from the romantic scenery and magnificent wildness of a country as novel as it was commanding; and when Edward called, he found her so wrapt in the prospect of enjoyment, that she lost her wonted reserve, and spoke to him with rapture of the scenes through which she should pass, the ideas they would awaken, and the pleasure of retracing them with her pen or pencil.

As Edward listened, he *loved;* the charms which had caught his eye, now entered his mind; and as he traced the sweet simpli-

city, the unblemished taste, the warm affection for parent and friend, which mingled in every hope, and pervaded every feeling of Louisa's, he felt as if reason justified the predilection, and gave him a right to devote himself to so much excellence.

But Edward was not subject to be led away by youthful hope; for hope and mirth, and all the genial train that dance around the gates of opening life, had been early repressed in him; and the more he loved, the more he feared. Anxious, however, to hide his present emotion from the observation of others, and carefully to examine it himself, he returned home by a circuitous path, partly to give himself more time for thought, ere he appeared at home, and partly in the hopes of meeting his mother, with whom he was anxious for some conversation, for to *her* he could reveal his every feeling and his every fear; and though sensible that Louisa had long held a place in his heart—though he only now owned her fully for its queen, he yet felt

that for his mother he could tear her thence, with all her charms, and even all her virtues.

END OF VOL. I.

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